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August 2016 Issue 47

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MEET THE EXPERTS

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PATRICK **FLORES**

Is currently a jiu-jitsu purple belt under Gracie Barra's Rafael "Moskito" Oliveira. He has a bachelors degree in history and is currently working on an MBA. His jiu-jitsu photography can be seen on Instagram under the name **patjflores**

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Look for us online:
@jiujitsumag

ON THE COVER

The Art of Winning - Rafa Mendes wins on and off the mats. Photo: Patrick Flores

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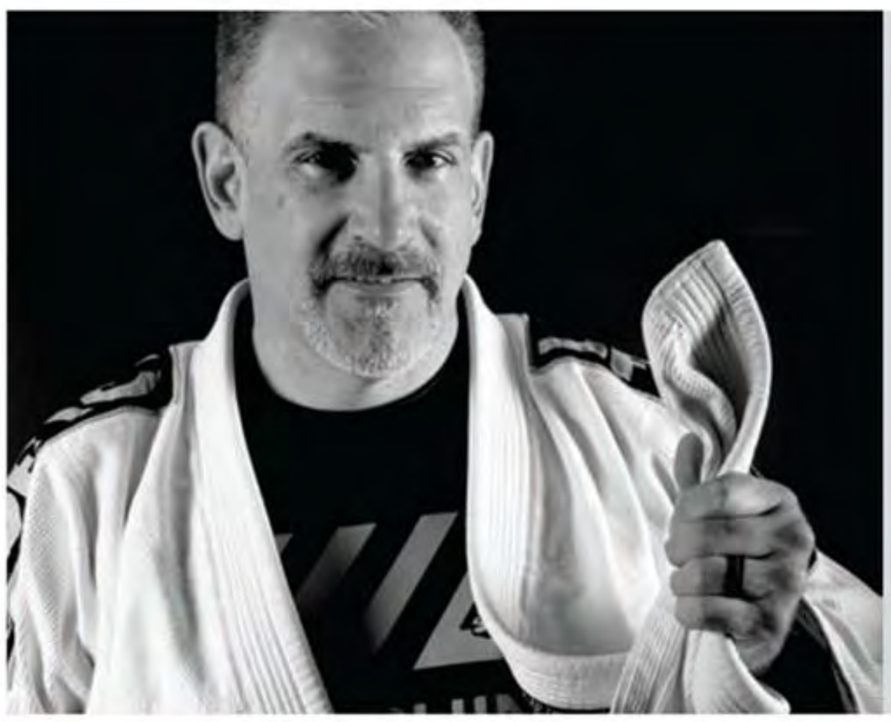
Who Is - The General



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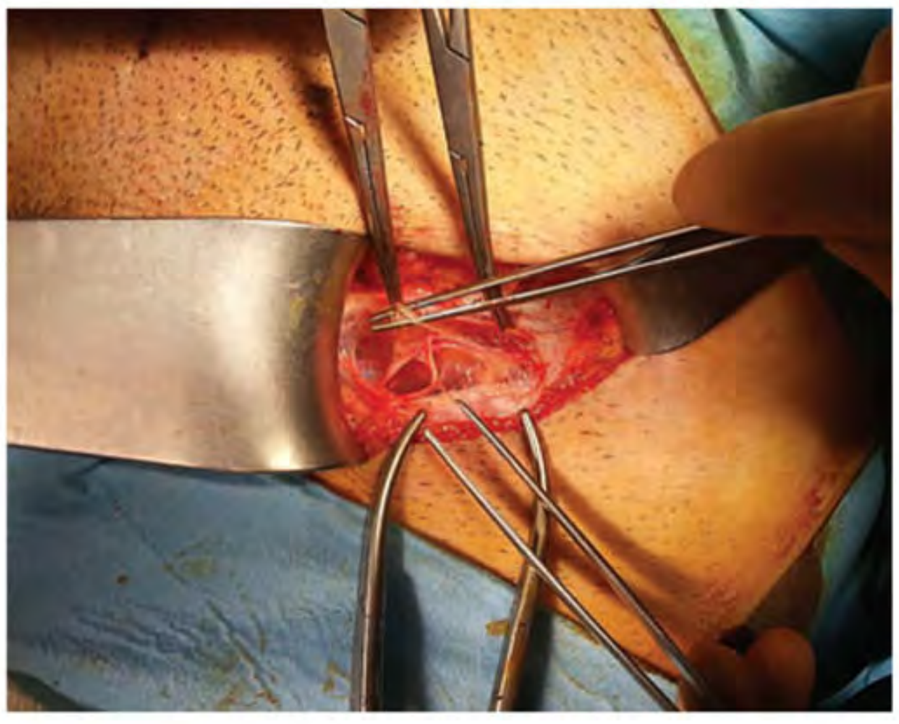

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Let's hope this isn't you. Hip Pains & Pulled Groins.

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EDITORIAL

EMBRACE FAILURE

I REMEMBER NOT LONG AFTER STARTING JIU-JITSU, MAYBE SIX MONTHS IN, AFTER I HAD A CHANCE TO ROLL WITH JUST ABOUT EVERYBODY AT MY ACADEMY, I WOULD GET TO CLASS AND THERE WERE A HANDFUL OF GUYS THAT I HOPED WOULDN'T SHOW UP. THEY WEREN'T "BAD GUYS" OR WOULD TAKE CHEAP SHOTS, BUT THEY WERE GOOD, OR AT LEAST A LOT BETTER THAN I WAS. Every time I rolled with them I'd get destroyed. It wasn't fun, but I took my licks and kept going to class. As my defenses developed and my skills progressed, that feeling of disappointment when walking in and seeing these guys turned into excitement. I knew that they were the ones making me better slowly but surely. Many years later, I'm sure I draw that feeling of disappointment from some of my teammates when they see me walk into class, usually a few minutes late. Maybe my tardiness is for dramatic effect. When we reach certain relative levels in our jiu-jitsu, we find ourselves at these points where maybe we're not being challenged like we have been. It's in those moments when we get sloppy or get relaxed in our skillset. These are the times that we need to seek out failure. Sign up for a competition, go to an open mat at a different school, and go out looking for those challenges that are going to make you better. As I'm writing this I'm reminded of a quote made famous in the movie 300. The actual quote is, "Son, either with this or on this." It's what Spartan mothers would say to their sons departing for war and referring to their sons returning alive or dead on their shield. Obviously the stakes aren't quite as high in jiu-jitsu; however, the idea remains. Either go out there to win or die trying. In that failure will come success. While researching that quote, I came across another quote that seems somewhat fitting, this one from the Spartan poet Tyrteaus, "...learn to love death's ink-black shadow as much as you love the light of dawn." I think that sums up the point I'm trying to get across. Learn to love defeat. It is what makes you stronger, smarter, better. Failure is what will make your jiu-jitsu more enjoyable. Maybe not in the moment but in the long run.

Keep Rolling,

MIKE VELEZ

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jiu-jitsu magazine

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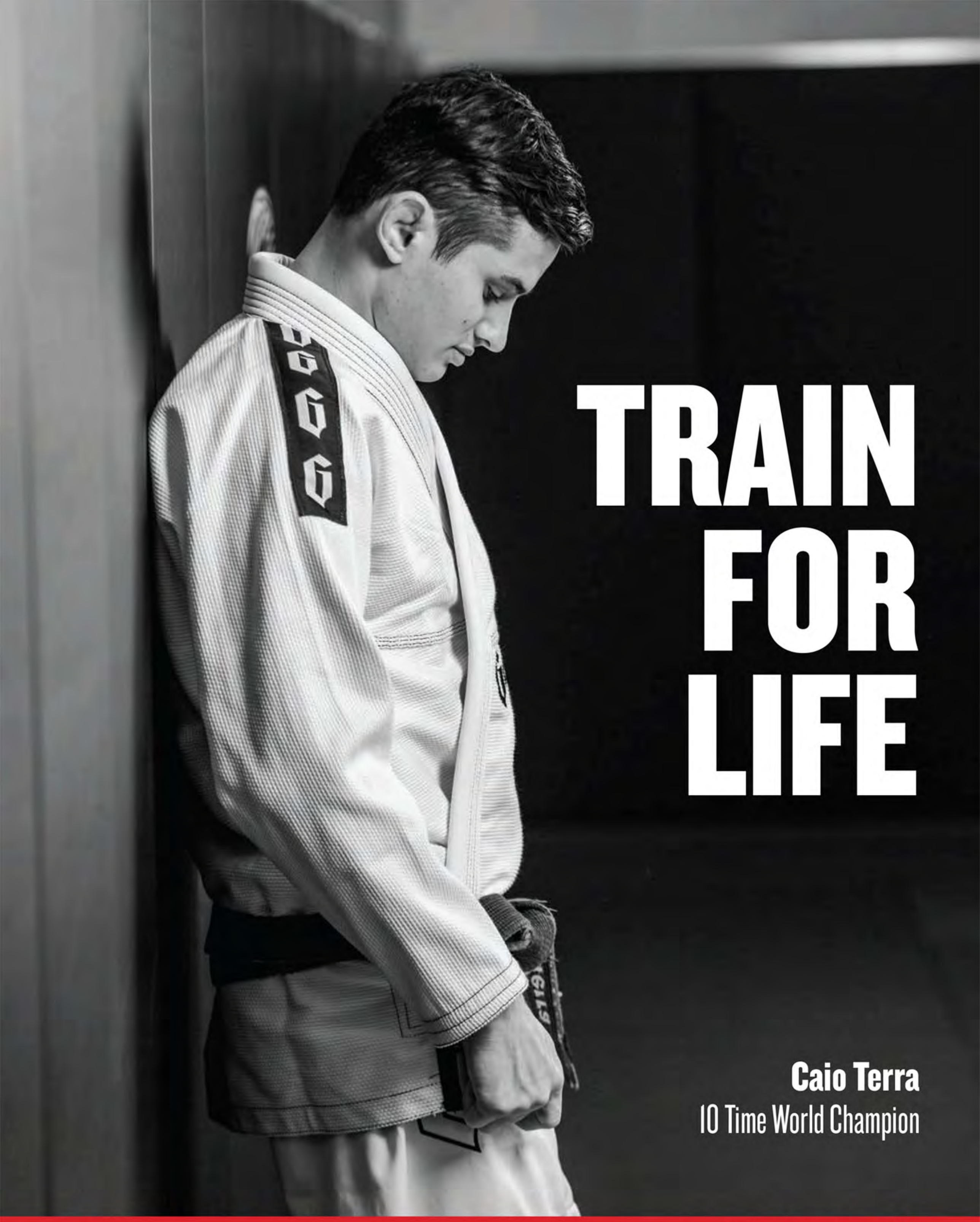

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IN FOCUS

PHOTO: **ALBERTO MARCHETTI**

RICKSON KNOWS

Master Rickson Gracie takes in the 2016 IBJJF World Championships and gives a nod of approval.

WEIGHING IN

SCRAMBLE TEESES US!

Don't be the least fashionable guy in the academy this summer. Check out Scramble's new line of Summer Tees. These shirts feature the unique designs that only Scramble is known for printed on some of the softest cotton you've ever laid your gritty hands on. Some of the shirts feature artwork by Philip Leitz and Sailor Danny. You can get your sticky fingers on these shirts for just $34.99 through the Scramble website.

scramblestuff.com

Zé Radiola and GB Split

Zé Radiola is one of Gracie Barra's most prominent instructors, having trained many great athletes such as Octavio Sousa as well as Victor and Braulio Estima. After a business dispute, Radiola left the Gracie Barra organization. As an instructor, many of his students (and academies his students opened) remained loyal to Radiola followed suit. It is unclear how many academies left with Zé Radiola's exodus, but initial estimates suggest Gracie Barra could lose over 100 academies (mostly concentrated in Brazil).

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bjjdating.com

MCGREGOR ENLISTS DANIS

As the rematch between Conor McGregor and Nate Diaz approaches, it is clear that Conor plans to take his jiu-jitsu training very seriously this time around. In their previous fight, Diaz was able to hurt Conor, forcing the Notorious One to shoot for a takedown. An attempt that was short lived as it became quickly evident that Diaz' jiu-jitsu was far superior. Conor has since brought in Marcelo Garcia Black Belt Dillon Danis as a sparring partner to help train for UFC 202. Danis is a very good gi and no-gi grappler who will be a good training partner for McGregor. UFC 202 will be held in Las Vegas on August 20th. We will see if Conor's confident/brave enough on the ground to try another takedown on the Caesar Gracie Black Belt, Nate Diaz.

UFC.com

Photo Credit Instagram @dillondanis

BUCHECHA'S BIG CHECK

Coverage Sponsored by Gameness

MARCUS BUCHECHA HAD ANOTHER AMAZING RUN AT THE COMPETITION TO CASH OUT THE $40,000 BIG PRIZE OFFERED FOR THE CHAMPION OF THE IBJJF PRO LEAGUE GP, SATURDAY, JULY 9, IN LAS VEGAS. THE FOUR-TIME BLACK BELT OPEN CLASS WORLD CHAMPION HAD TO FIGHT THREE TIMES TO MAKE IT TO THE TOP OF THE PODIUM TO TAKE HOME THE BIG CHECK.

Photo: Ane Nunes/Gentle Art Media

Photo: Ane Nunes/Gentle Art Media

Photo: Ivan Trindade/Gentle Art Media

Photo: Ivan Trindade/Gentle Art Media

Photo: Ane Nunes/Gentle Art Media

Photo: Ivan Trindade/Gentle Art Media

Buchecha's campaign started out with a bow and arrow choke on Bruno Bastos after applying a beautiful judo takedown, guard pass, and back take. [0365 ana] Then Buchecha had a rematch of the 2016 Worlds Ultraheavy Semifinal against the always dangerous João Gabriel Rocha. Rocha was coming from a dominant performance against Felipe Pena in the first round. Rocha put a lot of pressure on Pena's guard to score five advantages and get the spot in the semifinal.

Buchecha started out the match against Rocha in full speed, quickly getting to the full mount after a guard pass. Rocha was brave and fought back to get out of the tough spot and put Buchecha on his back again. The athlete from Soul Fighters fought as hard as he could to try to get back in the scoreboard but to no avail and the final numbers showed a 7-0 lead that took Buchecha to the final.

On the other side of the bracket, Leonardo Nogueira first had to face Alexandro Ceconi in a rematch of the 2016 Worlds Superheavy Final. This time, Nogueira took no prisoners and quickly got to Ceconi's back to finish with a bow and arrow choke.

The other quarterfinal was between Xande Ribeiro and Mahamed Aly, a true generational clash. Xande started out better, getting an omoplata in place and almost managing a sweep, but Mahamed fought back, allowing only an advantage. Eventually, Aly was able to get a sweep in place to go ahead in the board. He defended Xande's dangerous attacks to win in the end and advance to the semifinals.

Leo vs. Aly was a close match between two powerhouses. Leo Nogueira was able to resist Mahamed's pressure game to sweep once and then score a takedown and win 4-2 to qualify for the final against Buchecha- a reedition of the 2012 Worlds Black Belt Open Class Final.

WEIGHING IN

THE FINAL

Marcus Buchecha is all about pressure and finishes, but he also knows how to pace himself very well and play a strategic match. That was the case in the final. Buchecha scored two advantages early on for nearly passing the guard and then stayed on top and defended perfectly against Nogueira's dangerous half guard game. As the final buzzer came, he was able to smile and celebrate the big win...and also the extra $40k in his bank account.

"I was one of the biggest advocates of this kind of tournament, where competitors get prizes that allow them to live as professionals. I am very happy to say that all the doubts I had after the knee injury I had in 2015 are now gone. I am a better fighter and a better person now," summed up Buchecha.

Photo: Ane Nunes/Gentle Art Media

THE BRITISH ARE COMING!

Check out the latest offerings from the blokes over at Tatami.

DAUL-WEAVE ULTRA LIGHT

Ultra light gis typically stretch when worn. The Tatami Estilo Leve features a new dual weave jacket. The arms and top area is constructed from 475GSM pearl weave fabric, while the main body is made of lightweight 350GSM fabric. The pants are made from comfortable 8oz twill cotton. This combination allows the gi to be lightweight while staying as durable as a standard weight kimono. It's available in white, blue, and black. Could this be the start of a trend in gi construction?

TIME TO CHILL

When you're not on the mats, its important to get some R&R. Since it may trouble some people to walk around naked, it's best to buy some comfortable clothes for when you don't have the gi on. Tatami's new line of leisurewear has you covered. Take a load off and chill out this summer with Tatami's leisurewear!

BURLEY AND LEGAL

Just in time for no-gi season, these new 2017 long sleeve rash guards from Tatami feature 4-panel construction and a more athletic fit than previous years. All graphics are sublimated into the material to prevent the artwork from pilling and cracking. Offered in all IBJJF rank colors, and priced at $35, these rash guards are sure to provide any buyer great value.

tatamifightwear.com

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Original Stealh Fighter

The first stealth fighters were actually ninjas who snuck into the battlefield without detection. If you're quiet enough, that could be you the next time you roll in Hayabusa's new Stealth Keikogi. This ultra lightweight design will allow them to do just that. The jacket is 420GSM and a 100% cotton pearl weave. Branding is stealthy and not obtrusive. The pants are made of an 8oz cotton/ polyester blend ripstop for a mixture of strength and durability. The Stealth Keikogi is available in white, blue, and black. It's available from Hayabusa for $149.99.

BLACK TO PURPLE TO BLACK AGAIN

Retired MMA fighter and legendary jiu-jitsu Black Belt, Enson Inoue demoted himself to purple belt saying that the game of jiu-jitsu has evolved so much since he's been away from the sport that he technically didn't feel like a black belt. It made some news in the Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu community and elicited responses from notable figures in jiu-jitsu. Inoue has since re-promoted himself to black belt admitting he had made the wrong decision.

GIANNI GRIPPO HEADS WEST

Credit Instagram @heyleonmedia

It wasn't long ago [2014] that we were hearing about Gianni getting his black belt from the legendary grappler Marcelo Garcia. Now, after finishing up his bachelor's degree [English-Creative Writing] he's decided to move west citing the reasons being personal and professional growth. He will soon join the ranks of Cobrinha BJJ/Alliance in Los Angeles although he isn't closing the door on his relationship with Marcelo's team.

FUTURE
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jiu-jitsu
ROLL MODEL
Since he was four years old, 8-year-old Alex Fung has been in a gi, training jiu-jitsu. From Gatineau, Quebec, Canada, Alex began competing at age six, has already done 10 tournaments, and racked up an impressive 44 matches. With all those issues of Jiu-Jitsu Magazine at his disposal, it's just a matter of time before we see little Alex medal at Worlds!

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JUST ONE - HUNDRED MORE ROUNDS

Jhunior Guarnido is the head coach of Gracie Elite Australia in Pakenham-Melborne. On June 19th, he set out to go 120 rounds of jiu-jitsu without a break. He was doing so in order to raise awareness and donations for Friedreich Ataxia Research. Fridreich Ataxia is a degenerative, genetic, neurological disease that causes progressive damage to the nervous system. Tristan Allamby, who is a student's nephew, was diagnosed with Friedreich Ataxia at age four, making him one of the youngest in the world with the disease. With the support of his Gracie Elite team members and the community, they were able to surpass their $6000 goal by almost $3000. Jhunior Guarnido also ended up rolling for 200 rounds!

facebook.com/rollfortristan

LO WINS COPA PODIO

The Middleweight Grand Prix took place in Argentina, July 9th weekend. This action packed event showcased the grappling skills of notable competitors such as Alexander Trans, Claudio Calasans, and more. 3rd place of the Grand Prix went to Diego Borges who defeated newcomer Nicholas Meregali with a score of 2-0. Leandro Lo, however, was able to pull out a 6-0 victory in the finals over the always-tough Erberth Santos. Check out a replay of the event on

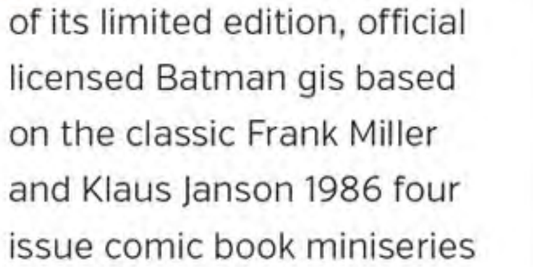
FloGrappling.com

THE DARK KNIGHT'S BACK!

Fusion Fight Gear has made a name for themselves by bringing together pop culture flair and quality jiu-jitsu gear. Their latest offering is a doozy. It's the Batman:The Dark Knight Returns Gi! It's the first of its limited edition, official licensed Batman gis based on the classic Frank Miller and Klaus Janson 1986 four issue comic book miniseries "Batman: The Dark Knight Returns". Even though it came out about the same time as the awful Michael Keaton, this miniseries changed the way comics were viewed forever.

The artwork for this gi was taken entirely from the artwork in the comic book series. The jacket is made of 550GSM Japanese weave cotton with heavy duty stitching and reinforced seams throughout. The pants are constructed of super-soft 300 gram double twill cotton. To keep them around your waist, there's a foam core drawstring that wraps around. This gi is available in sizes A1 through A4 and is very limited. Best of all, it's only $149.99, but there are only a few left, so hur y if you want to add it to your collection!

fusionfightgear.com



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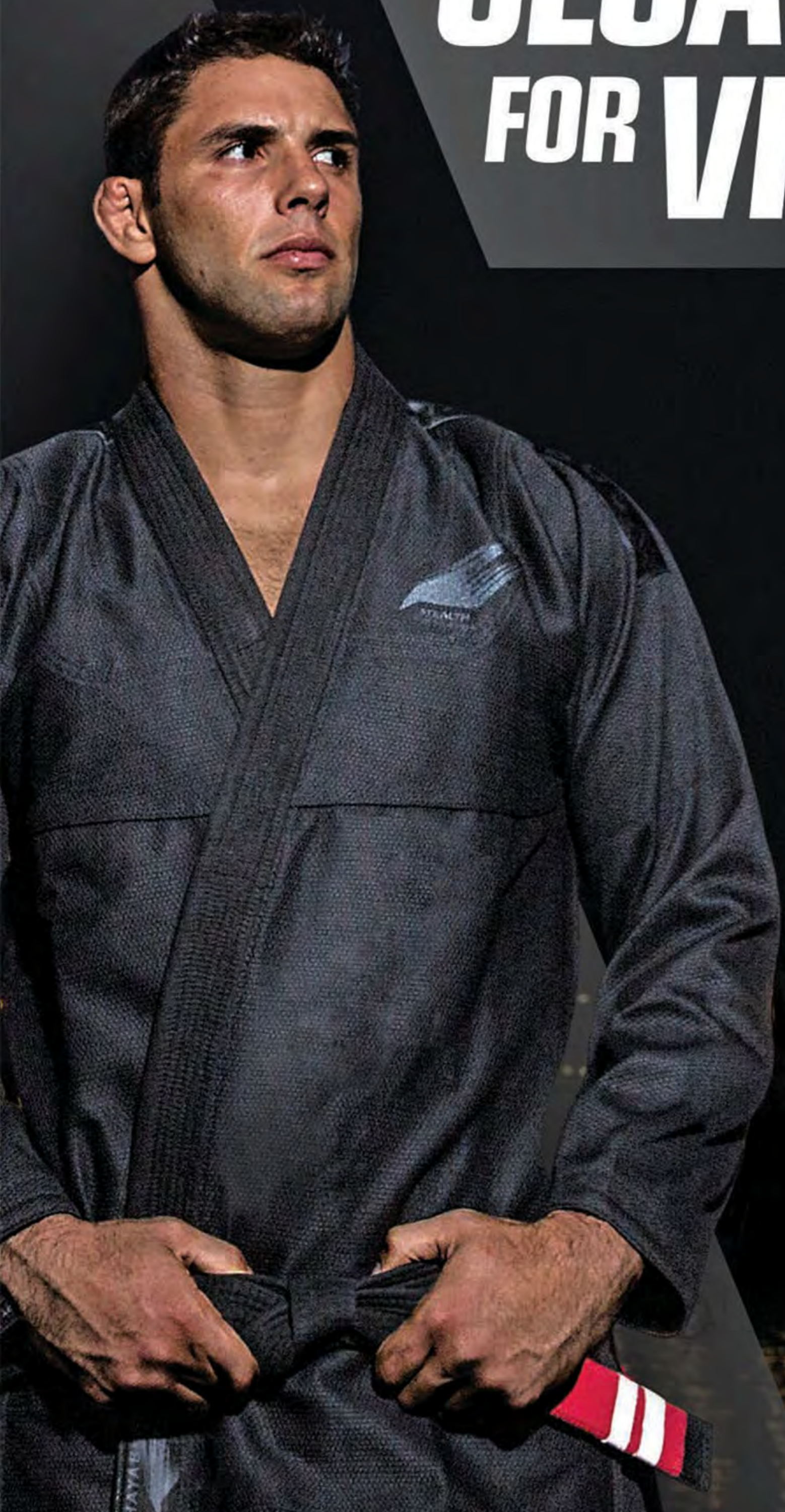

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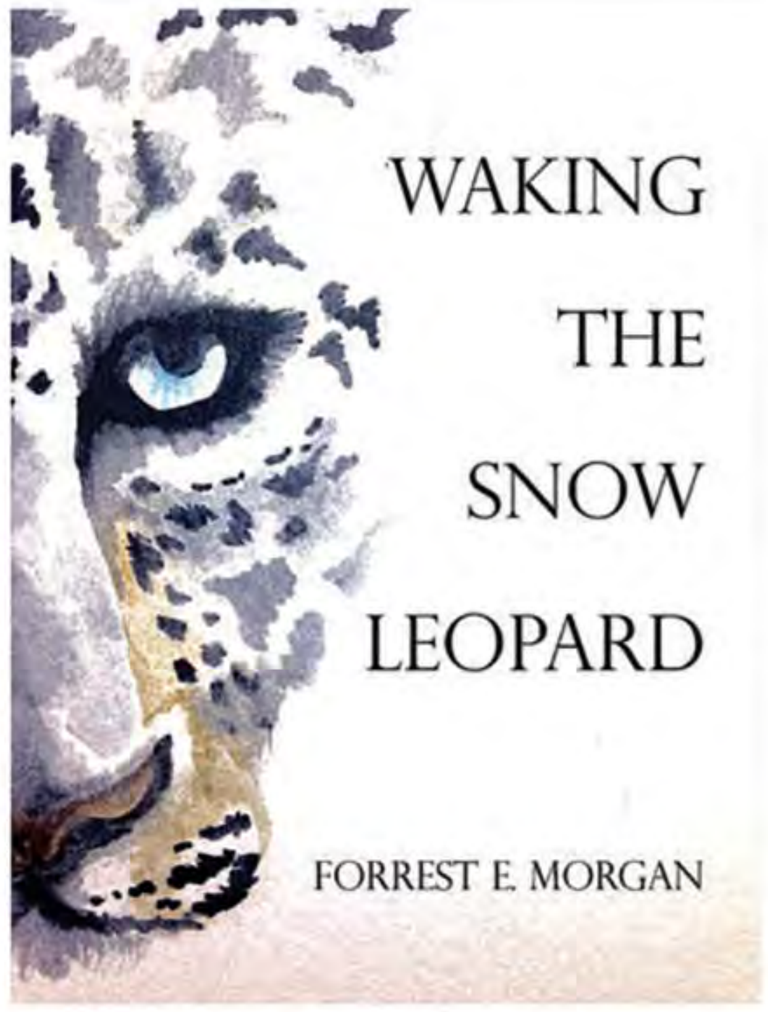
WEIGHING IN

MOVE OVER JASON BOURNE

When we got an email from an author pitching his fiction book involving jiu-jitsu, we were a little skeptical. We've seen eBooks out there before, love stories involving a jiu-jitsu academy and stuff like that. So the expectations weren't too high. Then we found out the author was Forrest Morgan who wrote "Living the Martial Way" which has sold over 100,000 copies to date. After an hour long phone call with Forrest, he briefed us on the backstory and plot of his upcoming book "Waking the Snow Leopard." We can't wait to get our hands on a few copies to pass around the office. The story involves a former Army Ranger who's versed in jiu-jitsu along with other martial arts. He's been groomed his entire life for something extraordinary because of his bloodline but he doesn't know it yet. The story is about this awakening and of course all humankind hinges on the choices he makes. The basis for the book's storyline is rooted in actual historical events and teachings.

Forrest is a senior political scientist at the RAND Corporation and an adjunct professor at the University of Pittsburg Graduate School of Public and International Affairs. He's retired from the U.S. Air Force after 27 years of service where he served as a space operations officer and did strategic planning in the Pentagon, taught at the school of Advanced Air and Space Studies. He's also been involved in martial arts for over 30 years. "Waking the Snow Leopard" will be available soon in print at quality booksellers and as an eBook on Amazon.



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THAT'S THE SPIRIT!

Moya Brand is getting in the spirit this summer with Hometown Capsule that includes this Hometown Hoodie for when it's too cool to rock the Hometown Tee alone. Both are limited releases to commemorate the summer games going on in Rio. Both are available in black only and made from 100% super soft otton. The Hometown Tee is available for $29.99 while the hoodie will set you back a little more at $64.95. Check out these items along with more fresh new gear at their website.

moyabrand.com

Travis Stevens Represents in Rio

Travis Stevens is a 2x Olympian [2008, 2012] in Judo and is a jiu-jitsu black belt under Renzo Gracie and John Danaher. Being an East Coast guy, he trains with the Danaher Death Squad. Travis is hoping his third trip to the Olympics will be a charm after a spot in the 2016 Olympic games in Rio. His most recent performances include a gold medal at the International Judo Federation World Judo Masters. This event was an invite only tournament with just 16 of the world's top Judokas per weightclass. We are wishing Travis the best of luck during the upcoming Olympics!

teamusa.org/USA-Judo

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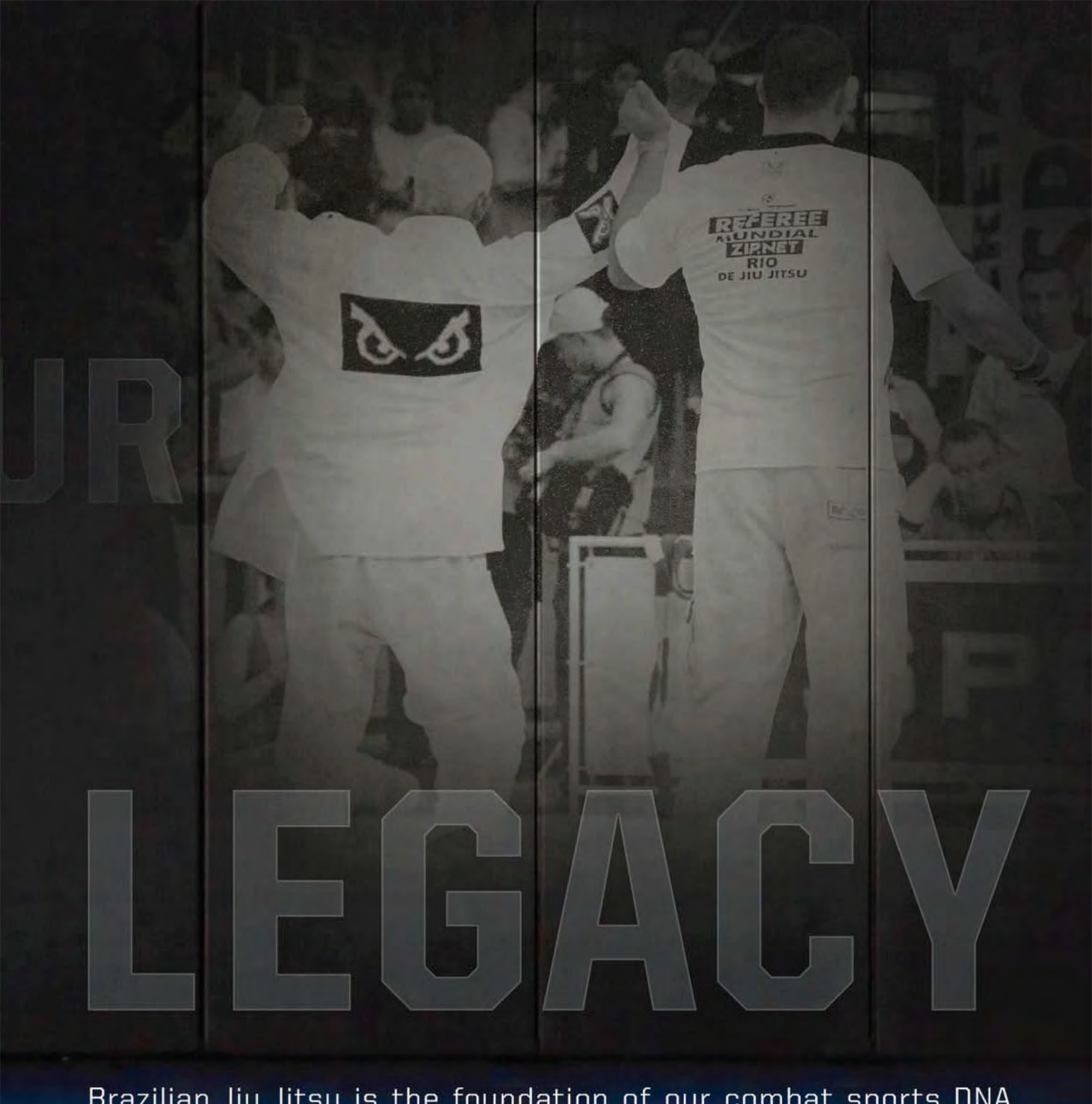

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WEIGHING IN

RALEK VS. THE WORLD (and Garry Tonon)

In case you didn't know, the Metamoris organization is under a bit of fire with Ralek Gracie taking a majority of the heat. The jiu-jitsu community and many of its athletes have voiced their opinions and it seems Ralek has finally heard them...sort of. As a way to mend his relationship with the community, his hope is that with the latest installment of Metamoris, he'll be able to retire some of those debts. This time around Ralek won't be sporting a backpack, unless or course it answers to the name Garry Tonon. Ralek will faceoff against Garry in what promises to be an exciting match. The stakes are high, at least for Garry. He's promised to get the words "G in a Gi" tattooed on his butt cheek if he loses to Ralek. In case you don't understand the reference, please drop everything you're doing and type "G in a Gi" in your nearest YouTube search engine.

metamoris.com

Beautifuly Fierce

That's the only way to describe the new limited edition line up of Fierce gear from DaFirma Kimono. These beautiful designs are sublimated into high-quality material and come from the mind of artist MJG. They're modeled for us here by World Champion Andrea Encarnacion. The Fierce line is made up of four new products: cropped spats, a tank top, rash guard, and board shorts cut specifically for women. As with all DaFirma gear, there are plenty of sizes available for each of these items. Remember, they are limited edition so don't wait.

dafirmabjj.com

JJM – THE ORIGIN STORY

A few of us around here are kinda tired hearing about it, but in case you want to hear Mike blather on about how Jiu-Jitsu Magazine came to be, you might want to head over to the Grappling Central Podcast, episode 94 and have a listen. Mike talks about how he got into jiu-jitsu, where the idea for the magazine came from, what his favorite vice is, and why it's important to hit record whenever you're doing an interview. Give it a listen!

grapplingcentral.com

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PROMOTIONS

PROMOTION

KWAN YAN WEI

School: Evolve MMA
Location: Singapore

At 29 years old, with over four years of training, Kwan received his purple belt from head coach Leandro "Brodinho" Issa. Way to go Kwan!

» JANET CONVERY

School: Team Mannon BJJ
Location: Blacksburg, VA

Congratulations to Janet Convery who was recently promoted to purple belt by Tim Mannon! Next step, brown!

» JETHRO ALCUAZ

School: Gracie Barra Upland
Location: Upland, CA

Congratulations to Jethro Alcuaz on receiving his brown belt from instructors Ana Laura Cordeiro & Rafael Novais!

» DIOGO TRIGO

School: 10th Planet London
Location: London, England

Big congrats to Diogo, a PhD at King's College in London, on receiving his blue belt! Way to go!

SIMON PARK

School: Fit 2 Defend, Combat Base

Location: Chicago, IL

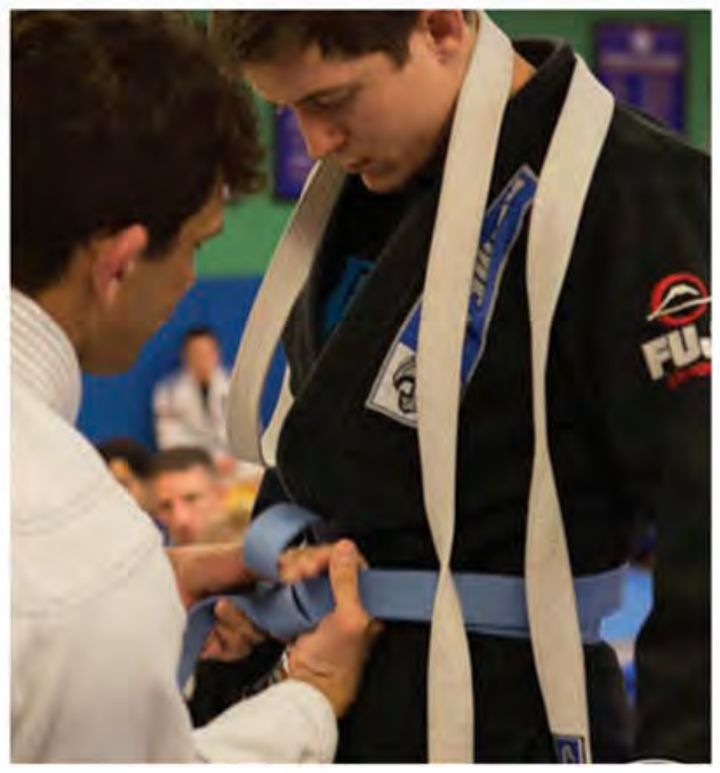
After starting jiu-jitsu in 2002, Simon received his black belt under renowned black belt, Chris Haueter. You can find Simon at his gym in Illinois, Fit 2 Defend.

» THADDEUS PRYOR

School: Prime BJJ

Location: Colorado Springs, CO

After a tough time in college, Thaddeus fell back on jiu-jitsu to get himself through a hard time. He wants to thank all of his training partners and coaches for all their help!



» KANSAS FOUR

❖ From left to right (Derrick Albert, Leonardo Pecanha, Farron Otis, Stephon Ragan, Alex Peterson).

School: Leonardo Pecanha Association

Location: Kansas City, MO

Its rare that we have any submissions from Kansas City, so big congrats to the guys recently promoted at Leonardo Pecanha Association.

» TERRY MOON AND ROY SMITH

School: Palm BJJ

Location: Saginaw, MI

Here at Jiu-Jitsu Magazine, it's always an amazing time when we see students receive their black belt. It's a symbol of hard work and determination. Big congratulations to Terry and Roy!

WHY EVERY GRAPPLER SHOULD DRINK COFFEE!

WORDS: **STAFF**

Coffee to Roll With

KIMERA KOFFEE

Sounds like a popular finish, but it's actually a great way to start the day. Drunk by jiu-jitsu brethren Nick "The Tooth", Eddie Cummings, Garry Tonon, Gordon Ryan, and Monique Ricardo just to name a few, the company is actually co-founded by Jake Shields. Kimera Koffee is grown deep in the central mountains of the Dominican Republic then infused with all-natural Nootropic amino acids. Each cup contains 725mg of their Nootropic blend which includes Alpha-GPC, Taurine, L-Theanine, and DMAE.

kimerakoffee.com

COFFEE ISN'T USUALLY CONSIDERED A HEALTH FOOD, BUT IT SHOULD BE. AMONG THE GRAPPLING COMMUNITY, THERE SEEMS TO BE A COFFEE SUBCULTURE EMERGING, AND THAT'S A GOOD THING. Along with giving you a little bit of pre-roll push, coffee contains four B vitamins along with minerals such as manganese, potassium, and magnesium. It is also an excellent source of antioxidants. In fact, many people get more of their antioxidants from the coffee they drink than from the fruit and vegetables they eat. Hopefully, that's not the case with you since you grapple, read Jiu-Jitsu Magazine and should be eating right. But it's worth noting that studies show that caffeine and other substances in coffee can lower your risk for several serious diseases. Here are just some of the ways that drinking coffee can improve your health, well-being, and keep you on the mats for many years to come.

COFFEE CAN PROTECT YOUR LIVER

According to research, drinking coffee can lower your risk for liver cancer, cirrhosis, and non-alcoholic fatty liver disease. Scientists from the National Cancer Institute examined data from over 27,000 adults in the U.S. National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey. Participants provided information on their coffee intake over 24 hours. Their blood was tested for four different markers of liver health. People who consumed three or more cups of coffee per day were less likely to have abnormal levels of all four liver enzymes compared to people who didn't drink coffee. Researchers found similar positive results for participants who drank decaffeinated coffee, suggesting that some ingredient other than caffeine promotes a healthy liver. This is important to note if you take a lot of supplements. Some supplements can put an extra toll on your liver function. That's why it's important to have your liver levels and enzymes checked by your doctor at least once yearly.

COFFEE CAN HELP DROP A WEIGHT CLASS

We always want to be in the optimum weight division in jiu-jitsu and coffee can help with that. Caffeine boosts the metabolism and increases the rate of calorie burning. In a study published in the American Journal of Clinical Nutrition, researchers recruited two groups of subjects. The lean group maintained a normal body weight with no effort. The post-obese group could only maintain a normal weight by restricting their food intake. The participants took 100 mg doses of caffeine every two hours while relaxing in a room respirometer that measured their energy expenditure. The caffeine increased the resting metabolic rate of both groups by 3-4%. It caused the lean group to burn an extra 150 calories a day and the post-obese group to burn an extra 79 calories per day. Researchers note that this small increase could accumulate over several months and lead to substantial weight loss.

COFFEE CAN GET YOU IN A GOOD MOOD

Hopefully, jiu-jitsu is putting you in the right state of mind, but in case you find yourself depressed, it's worth noting that coffee could help prevent clinical depression. A study published in the Journal of the American Medical Association analyzed data from 50,739 women. None of the participants had depressive symptoms at the start of the study. The women were followed up for ten years and completed food frequency questionnaires at various intervals. Over the ten year period, 2,607 cases of clinical depression were identified. Researchers found that depression risk decreased with increased caffeinated

BULLETPROOF

Developed by famed biohacker Dave Asprey, Bulletproof Coffee is a brand of coffee that's "upgraded" coffee beans that according to the company are low in mycotxins which are basically bad forms of mold. A complete Bulletproof Coffee is prepared with these upgraded beans along with 1-2 tablespoons of grass-fed unsalted butter and 1-2 tablespoons of "Brain Octane" oil, a form of MCT oil. Blend it up for 20-30 seconds until frothy and enjoy. According to Dave, he increased his IQ score by more than 20 pts, when using other "health hacks".

bulletproof.com

MATA LEAO

Want to get back to your jiu-jitsu's Brazilian roots? Then this might be the coffee for you. It's organic Brazilian coffee sourced from the Fazenda Nossa Senhora de Fatima Farm that's situated within the Tranlangulo Mineiro of the Cerrado region. This is one of the most well watered regions in all of South America. The farm sits near where the Grande and Paranaibas rivers intersect and the dark red soil helps to produce a uniquely rich, full-bodied coffee with a sweet chocolate flavor. Mata Leao coffee is 100% organic, Brazilian, and fair trade certified.

pressuregrappling.com

coffee consumption. Women who drank four or more cups per day were 20% less likely to become depressed than women who drank none. There was no significant association between decaffeinated coffee and depression risk.

IMPROVED BRAIN FUNCTION

When caffeine reaches the brain, it increases the activity of certain neurotransmitters and improves various aspects of brain function. Jiu-jitsu is the perfect example of an endeavor that requires optimal brain function. In a study published in Psychopharmacology, researchers investigated whether these cognitive benefits were due to positive effects of caffeine or the alleviation of caffeine withdrawal. A group of habitual caffeine users and a group of people who never drank caffeine were given either a caffeinated drink or a placebo. After 30 minutes, they were asked to perform a series of cognitive tasks. Both groups who drank the caffeine reported increased alertness and showed improvement in numeric, verbal, visual, spatial, and reaction time tests. However, caffeine enhanced the overall performance of the non-users more than the regular users.

» BE LIKE HELIO

Research has shown that coffee drinkers are less likely to develop Alzheimer's. That means greater odds of rolling in your later years. In a study published in the European Journal of Neurology, scientists theorized that if caffeine protects against degenerative changes in the brain, then healthy people would have higher levels of coffee consumption than Alzheimer's patients over the long period when brain changes are taking place. They examined 20 years of data from 54 patients who met the diagnostic criteria for Alzheimer's and 54 controls matched for age and sex. On average, the healthy controls had consumed more than twice as much caffeine in the previous two decades than the Alzheimer's patients. Caffeine intake was associated with a significantly lower risk for Alzheimer's, even when other risk factors were taken into account.

In addition to a reduced risk of Alzheimer's, research has shown that coffee drinkers have a lower risk of developing Parkinson's disease. A study published in the Journal of the American Medical Association analyzed data about nutrition and disease from 8,004 Hawaiian men. The men were followed up over 30 years and 102 went on to develop Parkinson's. The incidence of Parkinson's declined consistently with increased amounts of coffee intake. People who never drank coffee had a two to three times greater risk of Parkinson's than coffee drinkers and a five times greater risk than men who consumed 28 ounces or more of coffee a day. Researchers believe that the protective effect of coffee on the brain is due to the caffeine rather than other nutrients.

HOW LONG DO YOU WANT TO LIVE?

Coffee drinkers have a lower risk for several diseases, so it's unsurprising that they tend to live longer. A study published in the Annals of Internal Medicine investigated the association between coffee consumption and mortality from cardiovascular disease, cancer, and all causes. Data was obtained from 41,736 men who were followed up for 24 years and 86,214 women who were followed up for 24 years. The analysis showed that over the follow-up period, coffee drinking was associated with up to a 20% lower overall risk of death in men and up to a 26% lower risk of death in women. The effect was mainly due to decrease in the risk of death by cardiovascular disease.

BUT DON'T OVER DO IT

Although coffee drinking is generally good for you, it's possible to have too much of a good thing. Maximum benefits come from about four to five eight-ounce cups of average strength coffee a day. More than that may lead to jitteriness, anxiety, and heart palpitations. Drinking coffee late in the evening can disrupt sleep. Also keep in mind that trendy beverages from coffee shop chains are often unhealthy due to the amount of sugar, fat, and calories they contain. If you use a lot of sugar or cream in your coffee, make it a goal to incrementally reduce the amount of creamer, sweetener, or both.

KAYLA HARRISON
2012 London
Gold Medalist
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ESSENTIAL OILS

WORDS: **STAFF**

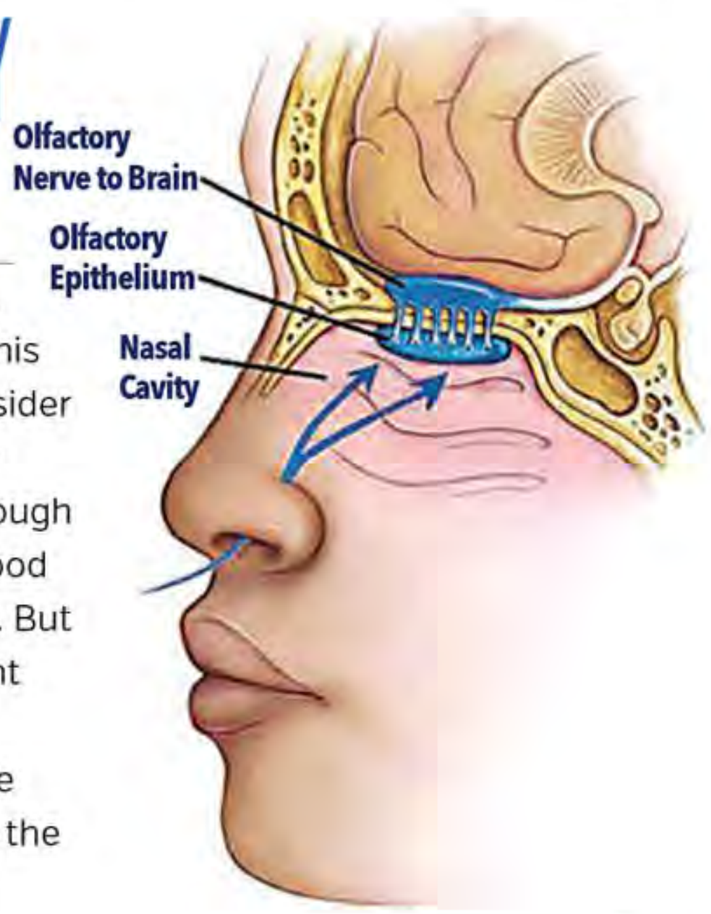
I KNOW WHAT YOU'RE THINKING. ESSENTIAL OILS AND AROMATHERAPY, THAT STUFF'S FOR YOGA MOMS AND HIPPIES. Well, that might be true, but there are actually clinical trials there to back up many of the claims associated with essential oils and their use in aromatherapy. The idea dates back to ancient times. The Egyptians would use certain odors to treat diseases. The Greek physician Dioscorides even wrote many books on the healing properties of essential oils. With that in mind, we thought we'd take a deeper look at the subject and see how essential oils might help out grapplers like us.

Essential oils are generally extracted by distillation. The oil is derived from a single part of a plant, or in the case of some oils, from several parts of a plant. Because of their concentrated nature, essential oils should always be handled with care. As a general rule they should not be applied directly to the skin although there are a small number of oils that can be. Before use, however, it's a good idea to check with your individual sensitivity to any oil by placing a smear on the underside of your forearm, and if any reaction develops, wash off immediately. There are many uses for oils, and they are most often blended with a "carrier" oil (also known as a "base" oil), such as olive or grape seed when used on the skin. Anyone suffering from serious skin allergies or in the first months of pregnancy should avoid using essential oils.

Another way to get the benefits of essential oils is through aromatherapy. There are different ways to administer the essential oils. One is through indirect inhalation by using a room diffuse or placing a few drops nearby to breathe in the odor. Another is through direct inhalation by use of an inhaler with drops floated on top of hot water. Clinical trials of aromatherapy have mainly studied its use in the treatment of anxiety, stress, and other health-related conditions. Results from these studies have been mostly mixed with some studies showing specific promise in some instances. Studies involving topical treatment have had mixed results with some studies reporting improvement in mood, anxiety, pain, constipation, and other ailments.

WHY AROMATHERAPY "MIGHT" WORK

Across many studies involving aromatherapy, mood improvement was cited across many. This is a difficul thing to directly quantify and consider scientific proof. Ohio State University recently found that lemon oil did improve moods, although it did not significantly change pain ratings, blood pressure, heart rate, or stress hormone levels. But if it put you in a good mood, doesn't that count for something? When you breathe in a scent, it enters in through the nostrils stimulating the olfactory bulb. This sends electric impulses to the limbic area in your brain and the amygdala.



OILS TO GRAPPLE WITH

The following are a list of oils that might benefit grapplers. This article is meant to be a primer. If you decide to give essential oils a try, please do additional research on the correct and safe usage.

BERGAMOT
(Citrus bergamia)

Bergamot has a delicate, clean, and slightly floral scent, and is reported to help relieve anxiety, stress, and loss of appetite. It is believed to have upliftin properties, and is used to create a relaxed feeling by dispelling anxiety and depression. Bergamot has antiseptic properties and is recommended for the treatment of psoriasis, acne, and cold sores. It can be used topically or diffused

CARDAMOM
(Elletaria cardamomum)

Cardamom's fragrance is sweet and spicy. Its reported properties are stimulating and uplifting. C rdamom is believed to have aphrodisiac properties and to help with digestion and combat nausea. Cardamom is recommended for sensitive skin and in the treatment of eczema and psoriasis. It can be used topically or diffused

EUCALYPTUS
(Eucalyptus globulus)

The scent of eucalyptus is sharp and clear. It is believed to help strengthen the nervous system and have cleansing qualities. It has strong antiseptic and antifungal properties and is recommended for relief from catarrh, respiratory ailments, acne and other skin conditions. Defense Soap uses this as an active ingredient in many of its formulations. In fact, the disinfectant qualities of eucalyptus oil gets better with age. It can be used topically or diffused. owever, if you plan to use it for aromatherapy, opt for eucalyptus citriodara instead.

FRANKINCENSE
(Boswellia carterii)

Frankincense has a spicy, woody fragrance. It is reported to have a soothing and comforting effect on the mind, easing anxiety and nervous tension. With antiseptic and revitalizing qualities, it is good for oily or aging skin, scars, and stretch marks. It also has anti-inflammatory properties and is good on painful or achy joints. It can be used topically or diffused.

GINGER
(Zingiber officinale)

Ginger's scent is spicy, sharp,and citrusy. Ginger is reported to have analgesic qualities, so it aids headaches and aching muscles. It is also reported to help combat nausea and to have aphrodisiac properties as well. It also has antiseptic qualities and can help with poor circulation. Use sparingly on sensitive skin. It can be used topically or diffused

LAVENDER
(Lavandula officinalis)

With its flowery, woody, slightly spicy fragrance, lavender is one of the most versatile of all essential oils. Its reported properties are calming, balancing, and relaxing, and as such, lavender is reported to help with insomnia. Lavender has antiseptic and antibiotic qualities and is recommended for greasy and sensitive skin. It gives soothing relief from burns, including sunburn, and from insect bites. Lavender can also act as an effective insect repellent. It can be used topically or diffused

LEMON
(Citrus limonum)

Lemon has a clear, sharp, and tangy fragrance. It is reported to improve concentration and aid clarity of mind. It has anti-fungal and astringent qualities and is good for greasy skin. It can also help with athlete's foot. This oil is a photosensitizer and should not be used before exposure to the sun, as it will make the skin more sensitive. This can be taken topically, diffused, or ingested. One drop to an 8 ounce glass of water can help cleanse your digestive system. Be sure to follow package directions before taking.

PATCHOULI
(Pogostemon cablin)

Patchouli's fragrance is probably easily recognized by anyone in the Master 2 and over divisions. It has a warm, earthy, smoky fragrance. It is reported to be beneficial in combating fatigue and calming anxiety. It is also reported to have sedative, pain relieving properties, and to help with headaches. Patchouli's antiseptic qualities are recommended for relief from acne, eczema, and chapped skin. It is also reported to be good for combating dandruff and fungal infections. It can be used topically or inhaled.

PEPPERMINT
(Mentha piperita)

Peppermint has a sharp, menthol aroma. It is reported to act as a mental stimulant, clearing the head. It's also reported to aid mental fatigue and help with memory lapses. Peppermint has antiseptic and anti-inflammatory qualities and acts as a good insect repellent. Use it topically or diffused

PINE
(Pinus sylvestris)

Pine has a fresh, woody fragrance. It is reported to help combat mental or physical fatigue. It can clear a tired and overworked mind. Pine can improve circulation and is good for sore muscles and stiff joints. It also acts as a flea repellent. It's also excellent for fighting respiratory illnesses and clear out the sinuses very quickly. Use it topically or diffused.

TEA TREE
(Melaleuca alternifolia)

If you buy just one oil then make it this one. Tea tree's scent is sharp and somewhat medicinal. This is the oil found in most home medicine cabinets. It is refreshing and vitalizing and is reported to help with shock and nervous exhaustion. It has antiseptic and cleansing qualities, and helps combat bacteria, fungi, acne, itchy skin, insect bites, and athlete's foot. It is also reported to have a stimulating effect on the immune system. This is another active ingredient found in many Defense Soap products. A study of tea tree oil as a topical treatment to clear antibiotic-resistent MRSA bacteria from the skin of hospital patients found that it was effective as the standard treatment. Tea tree oil can be used topically or diffused.

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90/90 HIP SWITCH DRILL

WORDS: **WILL SAFFORD**

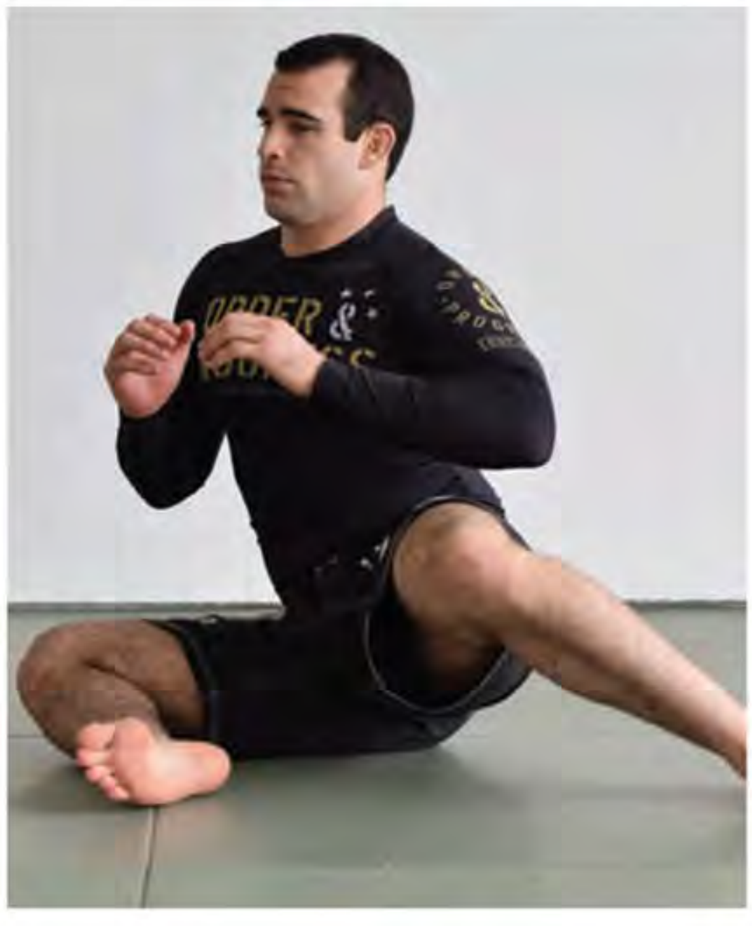
THE HIPS ARE ARGUABLY THE MOST IMPORTANT PART OF THE BODY FOR JIU-JITSU. THEY NEED TO BE STRONG, ACTIVE, AND MOBILE TO HAVE A DYNAMIC GUARD, TO MAKE FAST, POWERFUL ESCAPES, AND TO STAY LOW WHILE PASSING. That's why it's crucial to properly warm them up before training and have full range of motion in this area. The 90/90 hip drill is the perfect movement to loosen up your hip sockets and work internal and external rotation of your upper legs, two movements you'll most definitely need on the mat. When done properly, this drill will mobilize your hips and loosen the muscles of your inner and outer thighs, hip flexors, and even your glutes. Be sure to add this one before you next training session.

STEP 3

In the half-way position, both knees should be straight up from the ground while trying to keep your chest up and your back flat. The tendency is to collapse the lower back and slump over in this position. Try to fight this and maintain good posture while transitioning from side to side.

STEP 4

Next, lower both of your knees to the opposite side so you end up again in the 90/90 position with good upright posture. Hold this position for a moment before starting the transition back to the other side and repeating for reps.



» STEP 1

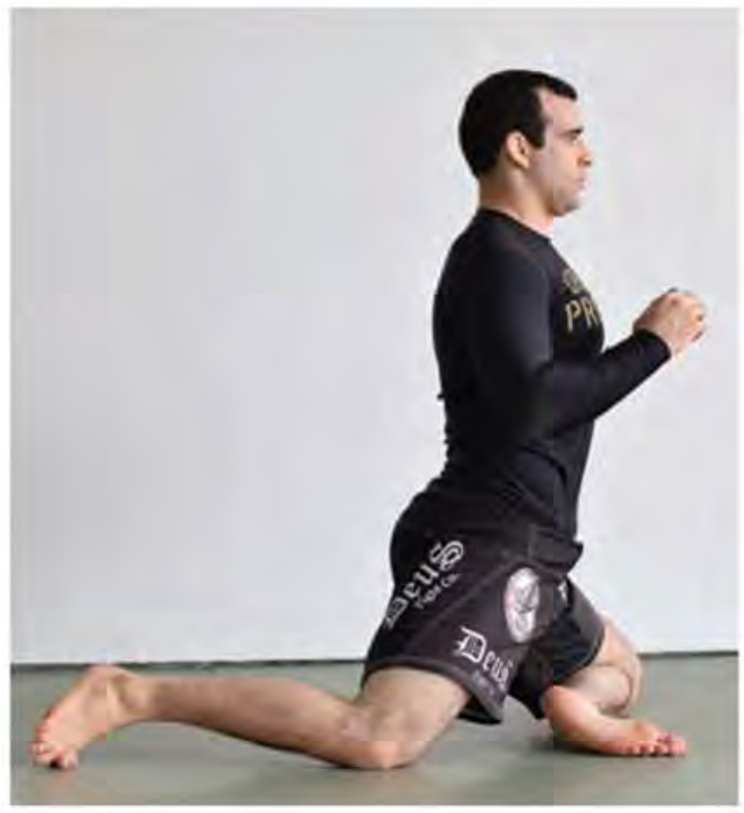
Start in a seated position on the mat with your legs in the "90/90 position". This involves starting in a cross-legged position, then internally rotating your right leg to mirror the position of your left. Your right knee should be behind your left foot and both legs should be bent at 90 degree angles. Do not slouch in this position, but sit tall with good posture. Ideally, your hands will be off of the ground in front of you. If you cannot assume the starting position due to restrictions, place your hands behind you on the mat while keeping both legs down in the 90/90 position.

» STEP 2

Begin the drill by externally rotating your right leg outward by lifting your knee off the ground while keeping your right foot in place. Once your right knee is vertical, begin to internally rotate your left leg inward by lifting your knee off the ground and keeping your foot in place. This drill is meant to be done slowly and deliberately, feeling each muscle activate and work while moving positions.

» STEP 5

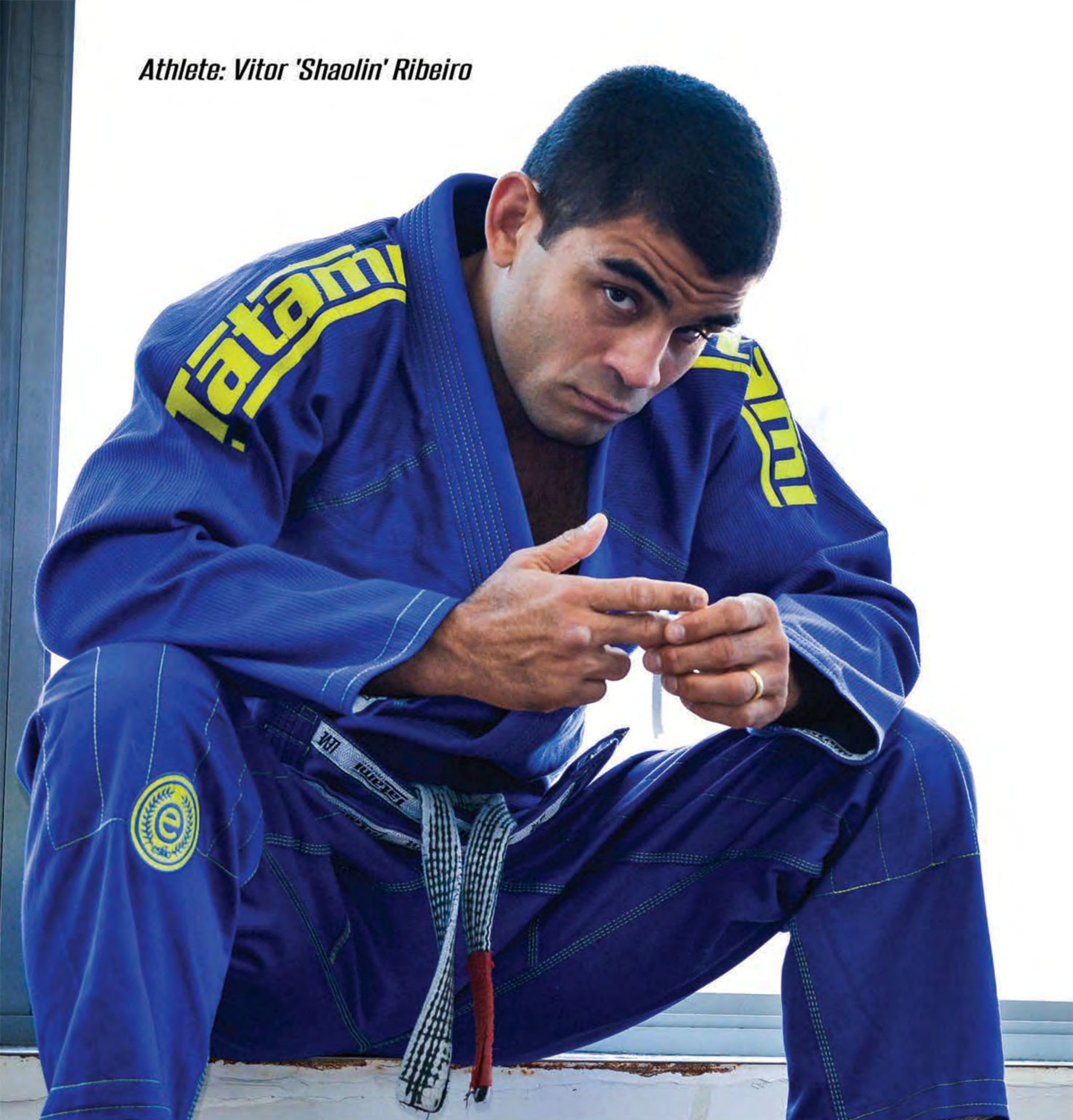
* **Moving from side to side** through this drill can be enough to mobilize and warm up your hips for training. However, if you want an added benefit, add a hip thrust to the end of each transition. After you move from left to right and end in the 90/90 position, drive your hips up off the ground and squeeze your glutes to thrust your hips forward. This will add an extra stretch to the hip flexors and warm up the glutes even more. Lower your hips back down to the mat, then repeat the sequence on both sides for repetitions.



PRESCRIPTION

Use the 90/90 drill before any class, workout, or competition. If you're overly tight, start in the 90/90 position with your hands on the mat behind you. Move slowly from side to side, lifting your knees while keeping your feet in place for six reps. Then, bring your hands off of the floor and use your core strength to maintain good posture while transitioning from side to side. Complete another six reps. Finish your hip warm-up with another six reps but end each transition with a hip thrust.

Athlete: Vitor 'Shaolin' Ribeiro



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WHO IS: FABIO GURGEL

A Conversation with The General

WORDS: **RYAN FORD**

WITH THE RAPID GROWTH OF JIU-JITSU AROUND THE WORLD, MORE AND MORE NEW PRACTITIONERS ARE BEGINNING THEIR JOURNEYS IN OUR WONDERFUL ART. TODAY, PEOPLE FROM ALL WALKS OF LIFE GET HOME FROM WORK AND TAKE OFF THEIR SUITS, TIES, NAME TAGS, TOOL BELTS, AND BOOTS IN EXCHANGE FOR A GI. They spend a couple hours of their evening on the mats, grappling with other civilians and improving their skills in a positive environment. On any given evening you can see a lawyer trying to choke a plumber, a firefighter trying to sweep a bartender, and an IT specialist trying desperately to pass the guard of a young fast food worker. All of whom are immersed in their haven away from work, bills, family problems, and the stresses of life.

In the organized and bright modern age of our sport, it is easy to forget that just one generation ago, the jiu-jitsu lifestyle was very different than it is today. The painstaking process of establishing jiu-jitsu in the US was a long road of bare knuckle challenge matches, no holds barred events, and deep team rivalries. But it paled in comparison to the environment that existed in the art's homeland of Brazil from the 1980s to the early 2000s. For those two decades, Rio De Janeiro was witness to bloody Vale Tudo fights in arenas, brawls on the beaches and streets, and rivalries that resembled gang wars more than team grudges. In a city that already required a ton of grit and street smarts to survive, the jiu-jitsu scene was packed to the brim with fearless warriors, craft technicians, and a ton of old school tough guys.

It was also a time when legends were born, champions were crowned, and masters were forged. Men like "The General" Fabio Gurgel. I had the honor to learn from him at a seminar when he came to my city in 2014. Despite his warm laugh, big smile, and genuine friendly demeanor, one look at Master Fabio will tell you that he is a man who has seen some battles. With scar tissue, a nose that has definitely had some breaks, and a pair of cauliflower ears that would make other cauliflower ears pay a tax to share the name, "The General" is the real deal. But after a few minutes with him, it is easy to see that he has a big heart and a great desire to empower others with jiu-jitsu.

Just recently, I was able to get him on The Grappling Central Podcast for an interview

in hopes that he could share some stories from the glory days in Rio, and he did not disappoint! In the beginning of our conversation, Master Fabio talked a bit about his recent trip to Abu Dhabi and a large seminar tour he just finished. He also said he remembered me from the seminar and that he had been telling the world about how great my jiu-jitsu was.... Okay, I may have exaggerated that last part just a bit, but he at least remembered me being in attendance.

In the Beginning

Master Fabio started competing at 15 years of age and has competed frequently ever since. He shared several memories of the tournaments in Brazil, which he made clear were not as organized as the tournaments we have today, and laughed as he recalled a time when Masters Rickson and Royler Gracie, who were reffing, t attacked by an unruly group of coaches who quickly realized they'd bit off more than they could chew.

Making History

In 1989, at just 19 years of age, Master Fabio became the first black belt awarded by Master Romero "Jacare" Cavalcanti. This put him in a significant position as a young, tenacious representative of jiu-jitsu at a pivotal time in the combat sports world of Brazil. An old rivalry that had been building since the 1940s was reaching a boiling point in the 1980s between Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu and another style native to the country, Luta Livre. Primarily a combination of Catch Wrestling and Judo, Luta Livre had built

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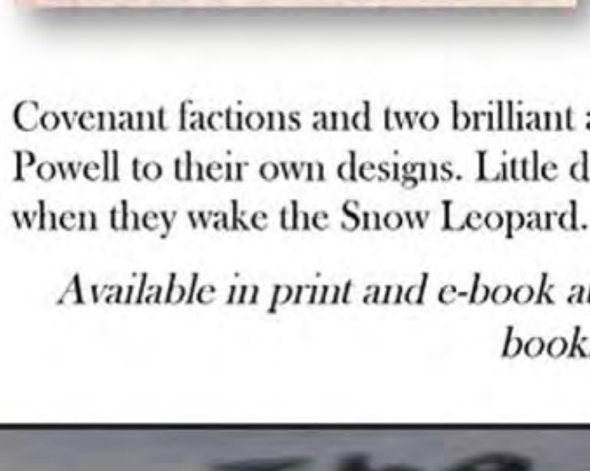
From the author of *Living the Martial Way*, comes...

Waking the Snow Leopard

A tale of conspiracy, sexual manipulation, and international intrigue

Owen Powell, a former U.S. Army Ranger and intelligence officer, extensively trained in the martial arts and educated in the best universities, was bred and groomed to be one of the most powerful men in the world. He has inherited the role of Arbiter, the ultimate authority in disputes between Great Houses of the Covenant, a powerful, secret religious order with tentacles that span the globe. But he doesn't know any of this because his father was murdered before passing on the family legacy.



At the dawn of the third millennium, Covenant leaders meet to discuss an ominous prophecy. The world faces an apocalypse. The Arbiter will wake and the fate of humankind will hinge on a choice he will have to make. Covenant factions and two brilliant and beautiful women vie to bend Powell to their own designs. Little do they know the perils they face when they wake the Snow Leopard.

Available in print and e-book at Amazon.com and other quality booksellers

That's Ryan flanked by Master Romero "Jacare" Calvacanti to his right and Master Gurgel to his left.

a large army of fierce representatives who were hell bent on reigning supreme in the arenas of Vale Tudo events. With Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu being the long undisputed king of Vale Tudo and the streets of Rio, competition became intense between the two styles. During Fabio's formative years in jiu-jitsu, it was not uncommon to see large brawls between the two groups on the beach, at local gyms, or in the nightclubs of Rio de Janeiro. Master Fabio recalls times at the height of the rivalry where guns and knives were drawn during clashes between the groups.

Fabio was present when finally, in 1991, Master Carlson Gracie and the leaders of the Luta Livre group sat down to organize an event to settle the rivalry once and for all. Alongside Wallid Ismail, Murilo Bustamante, Marcelo Behring and Amaury Bitetti, Master Fabio represented Team Jiu-Jitsu in the historic event. He recalls his father receiving threats from his opponent's family and the pressure that was on him to win for jiu-jitsu. He would not disappoint as he and his team all won their fights, claiming the crown for jiu-jitsu and calming the rivalry for many years. Master Fabio went on to talk about the influx of new students that came after that event and how he went on to win four Brazilian National Championships and four World Championships in jiu-jitsu, and even made an appearance in the UFC. Now a world renowned instructor and head of Alliance Sao Paulo, Master Fabio has produced some of the biggest names in the sport today. Some of his students include Rubens "Cobrinha" Maciel , Lucas Lepri, Bernardo Faria, Tarsis Humphreys, Demian Maia, Gabi Garcia, Leo Nogueira, the Langhi brothers, and who many consider the greatest competitor of all time, Marcelo Garcia.

An Open Book

Fabio seems to have no problem talking about all chapters of his life, good or bad, and discussed in detail the major split within Team Alliance in the early 2000s. It was a very difficul time for him as Fabio lost the vast majority of his black belt alumni during this time and had to rebuild his team from scratch. Needless to say, Alliance has remained an absolute powerhouse in jiu-jitsu competition and Master Fabio credits that to the unique teaching methodologies his students receive, which he also discusses in detail. He sees a bright future for his team and with a leader like him, how could they go wrong?

We all should be grateful for his lifetime commitment to jiu-jitsu. Without the courageous representatives of jiu-jitsu from the old days like "The General", jiu-jitsu may not have reached the rest of the world. And I think we can all agree, without it, our lives would be far less fulfilling. For more great interviews be sure to tune into the Grappling Central Podcast at **grapplingcentral.com.**

White Belt Chronicles

THE MEANS-WELL WHITE BELT

WORDS: **MARSHAL CARPER**

IN OUR SPORT, THE STEREOTYPE OF THE KNOW-IT-ALL WHITE BELT IS WELL ESTABLISHED BECAUSE NEARLY ALL VETERAN JIU-JITEIROS HAVE ENCOUNTERED A BRAND NEW STUDENT COACHING ON THE MAT OR OFFERING ADVICE ON SOME POSITION OR CHALLENGE.

The typical reaction to this is anger. How dare a white belt try to teach or mentor! They can't shrimp but there they are critiquing an upper belt's armbar! Where do they get off thinking that they have the authority to do that?

Before you live-tweet the assault that you're picturing in your mind, take a step back and remember what it's like to be a white belt. While a know-it-all white belt will always be frustrating, we as experienced grapplers have to recognize that this phenomenon is not always a result of an inflated ego or an outright act of disrespect. In reality, a know-it-all white belt is more likely a means-well white belt. There's a big difference. The former is a jerk to the core, and the latter is sincerely trying to be a meaningful part of the community.

The origin story of a means-well white belt should sound remarkably familiar.

No matter how you discover jiu-jitsu, you likely have at least one circle of friends where you are the first person to ever try jiu-jitsu. Even if a friend invited you to try it, you might end up at a family barbeque or an office meeting where you are the sole person to have ever tried the art. Suddenly, this brand new student who doesn't know a gogoplata from a Baratoplata is a jiu-jitsu missionary. Even if the time he or she has spent on the mat is relatively brief, the enthusiasm can be real and quite powerful, so the white belt wants to do right by the sport he or she is starting to love and be a good representative.

When a coworker asks about jiu-jitsu, the means-well white belt will try to answer. When the awkward cousin asks for a demonstration, the means-well white belt tries to explain a technique. When a friend asks if jiu-jitsu is fun, the means-well white belt excitedly talks about the next class time for beginners.

Join the Team

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This creates a feedback loop where white belts feel like they have to have the answers. After all, everyone is asking them questions about jiu-jitsu and they want to represent their passion well. Eventually, those good intentions can spill on to the mat where an upper belt unfairly looks on in disgust.

I love white belts; especially, the means-well variety because their hearts are usually in the right place. I have to admit that I was a means-well white belt, watching as many YouTube instructionals as possible while posting as much as possible about training on Facebook when I actually knew very little about the sport. This is the advice I wish someone had given me when I first started training [if you are an upper belt, spread it; if you are a white belt, heed it]:

If you are an upper belt, spread it; if you are a white belt, heed it.

1. "I don't know" is a valid answer. If someone asks you how to do a technique or about a particular point of history, you are allowed to admit that you are new. No one will think less of you on the mat for being a white belt–we've all been there and understand what it means to be a white belt–and your friends should give you the same courtesy.

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2. Admitting you're new is a good way to protect yourself. As an upper belt and an instructor, I actually love to see students helping each other. Even as a brand new student, you have the capacity to contribute and to make someone else's experience on the mat a little bit better. From my vantage point, and I suspect that most reasonable instructors will agree, I don't mind if a new student helps another new student as long as they temper it with some sort of qualifier like, "I think this might be it but I'm new so I could be wrong."

3. Don't be afraid to phone a friend. If you are faced with a tough question as a jiu-jitsu missionary, or even as a well-intentioned training partner during a class, remember that you are a part of a community now. Most upper belts won't mind lending a hand or answering a question about the sport that you don't know how to answer. If you ask politely and are respectful of an upper belt's time, the experience should be positive for everyone involved.

My hope is that this short article helps to ease the frustration that upper belts have with means-well white belts and that those white belts themselves make an easier transition into the community. In my mind, these are the kind of people that, with time, become the best ambassadors for the sport. If we can all be a bit more humble and a bit more understanding, we can turn a common point of frustration in our sport into a steady source of new, positive faces.

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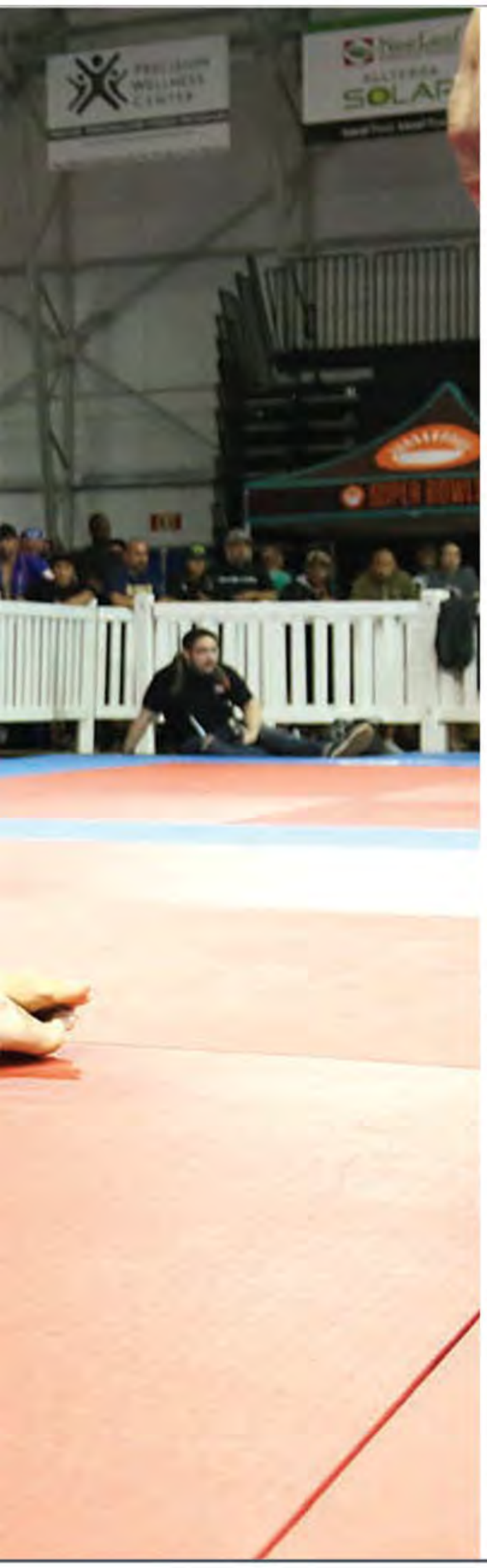
MOUNT VOCABULARY

More to Mount than Meets the Eye



WORDS: **MARSHAL CARPER**

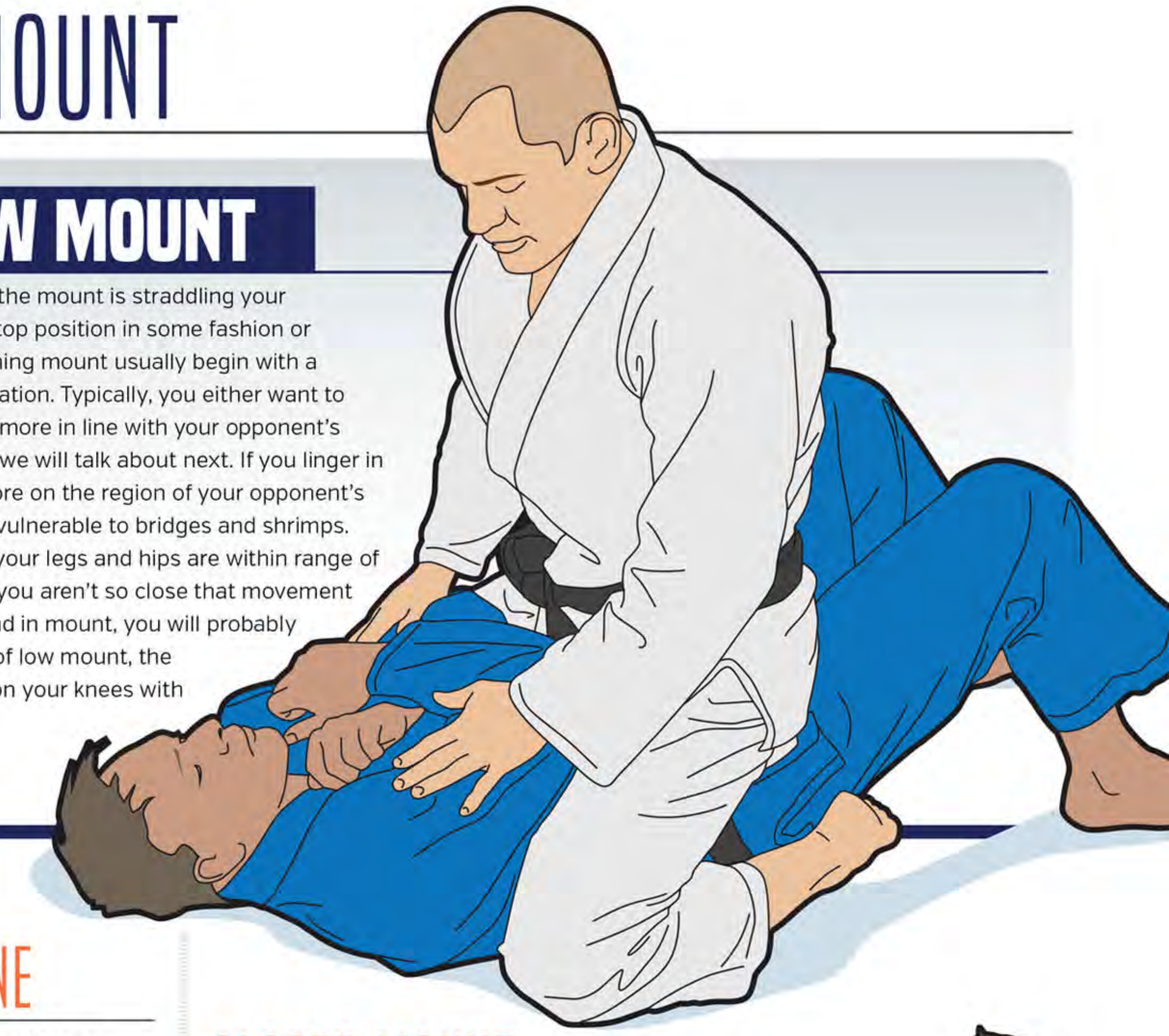
IN THIS NEW INSTALLMENT OF THE JIU-JITSU VOCABULARY SERIES, WE EXPLORE THE MOUNT POSITION AND ITS MANY VARIATIONS. THE MOUNT, DESPITE ITS PHILOSOPHICAL ACCEPTANCE AS A DOMINANT POSITION, IS A FRUSTRATING POSITION FOR MANY GRAPPLERS. Outside of MMA, the mount can feel very limiting when strikes are absent. This is a misconception that has two major causes: we spend relatively little time in mount because it takes so much work to get there and by the time we do get there, we think too much about holding mount and not enough about meaningful transitions.

By breaking the mount down into component positions–much in the same way we did with side control and with the guard in previous issues–you can approach the mount more methodically and have more success with the position, giving you a better understanding of your submission options and of the path you can take to move to an even more dominant position: back control.

LOW MOUNT

BASIC LOW MOUNT

The broadest definition for the mount is straddling your opponent's waist from the top position in some fashion or another. Problems maintaining mount usually begin with a misunderstanding of orientation. Typically, you either want to have low mount–your hips more in line with your opponent's hips–or high mount, which we will talk about next. If you linger in between, with your hips more on the region of your opponent's solar plexus, you are most vulnerable to bridges and shrimps. You are close enough that your legs and hips are within range of your opponent's arms, but you aren't so close that movement is stifled. When you first land in mount, you will probably want to secure a variation of low mount, the simplest of which is being on your knees with your base spread wide.

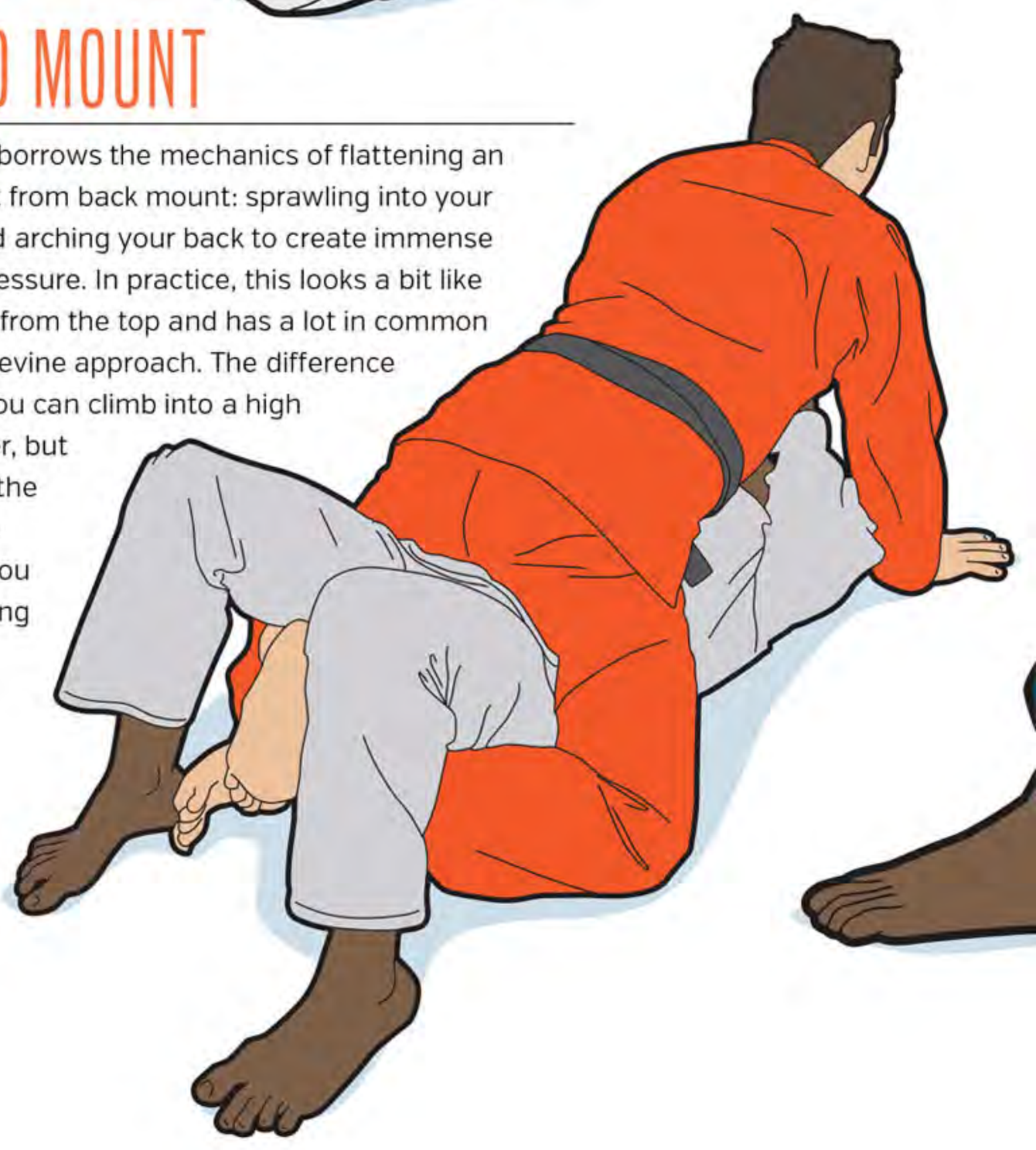


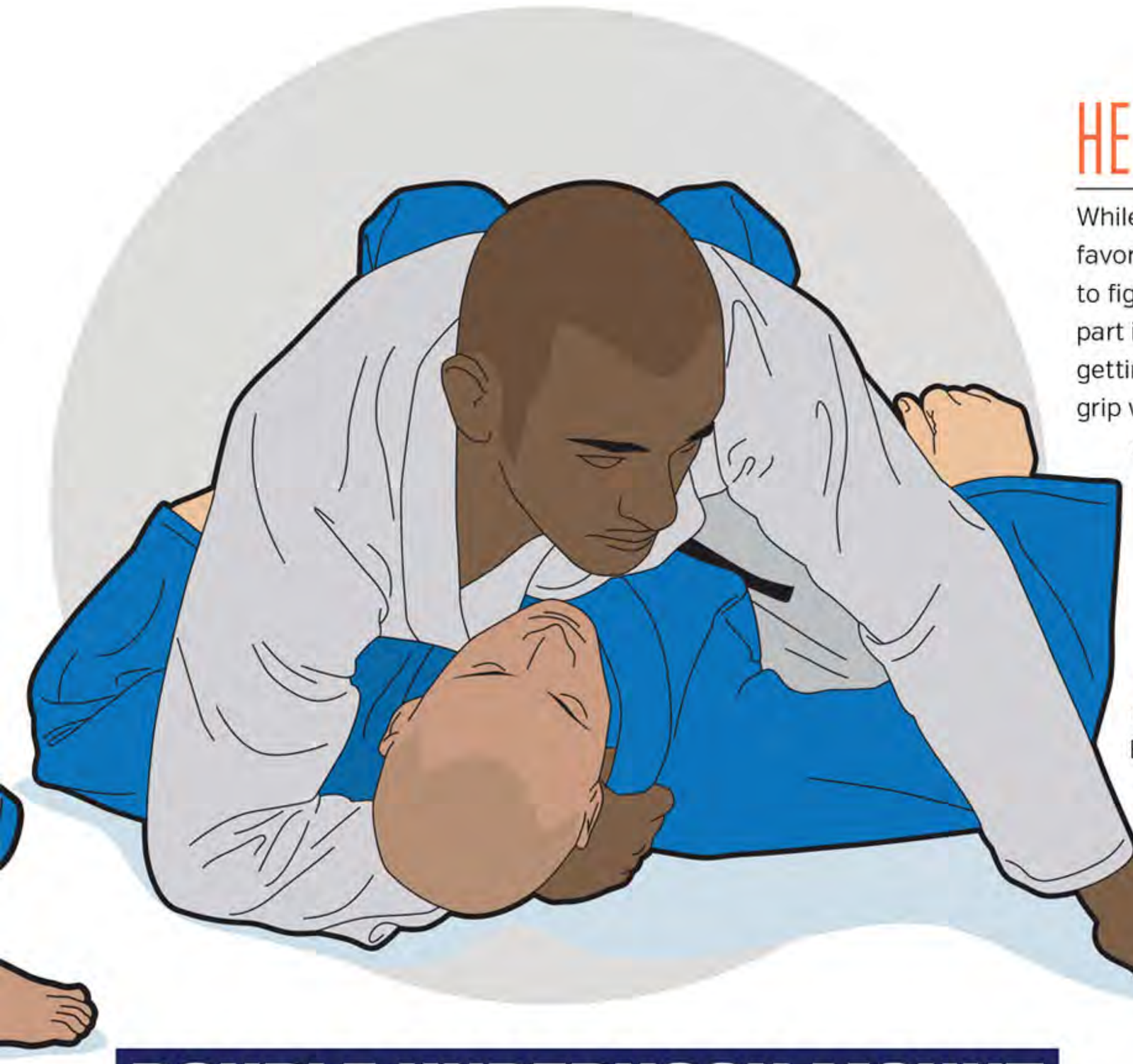
LOW MOUNT WITH GRAPEVINE

Your opponent has two primary escape options for mount: to bridge or shrimp. If you sink your hips low and lace your opponent's legs with your feet, you can apply a great deal of pressure to the pelvis and limit tricky footwork. From here, you can absorb bridge attempts and have your hands free to fight for upper body control. The drawback to this position is that you trap yourself as much as you trap your opponent. Moving from a grapevine to a high mount means covering a lot of distance, and that can be tough.

CLOSED MOUNT

This position borrows the mechanics of flattening an opponent out from back mount: sprawling into your opponent and arching your back to create immense downward pressure. In practice, this looks a bit like closed guard from the top and has a lot in common with the grapevine approach. The difference here is that you can climb into a high mount quicker, but you sacrifice the leg and ankle control that you get from having grapevines.





HEAD HUG

While your legs and hips apply pressure with your favorite variation of low mount, your hands are free to fight for grips. The grips you have will play a big part in what happens next with your position, so getting into the habit of fighting for your favorite grip will pay off in the future. The head hug uses shoulder pressure–much like you might in side control–to stop your opponent from shrimping. Sometimes this position is preemptive, but for grapplers that prefer other grips, this position often starts as a crossface counter to an escape attempt. Once you have it, the shoulder pressure you can apply might create an opening for a high mount transition or an Ezekiel choke. At the same time, however, you need to be on the look out for a bridge and roll escape because your commitment to head control can leave your arm trapped under your opponent.

DOUBLE UNDERHOOK MOUNT

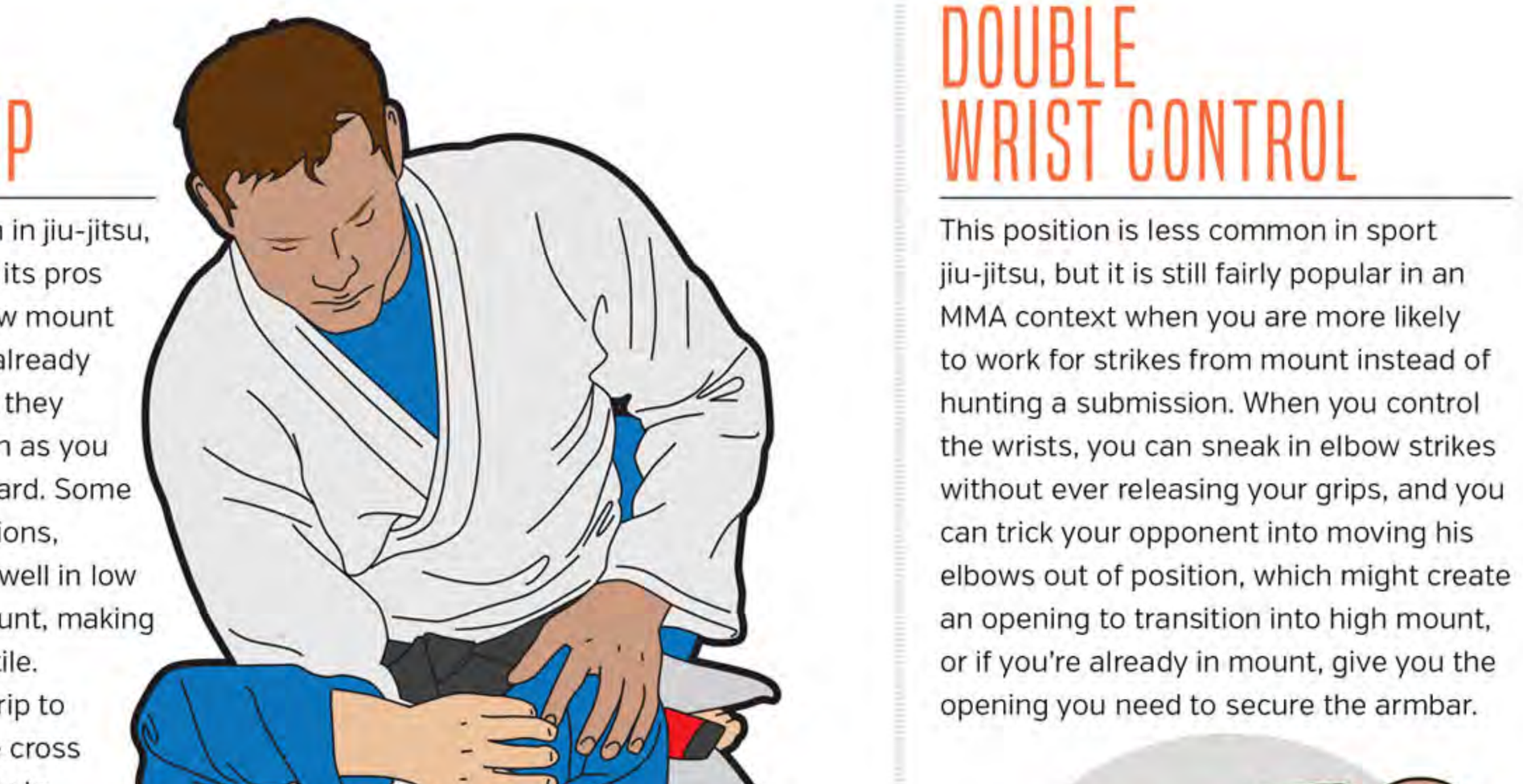
Newer students often abandon underhooks when they transition to mount because they feel as though it traps their arms in a precarious position. While it's true that you could be vulnerable to a bridge and roll if you keep an underhook in mount, having both underhooks gives you the option to apply an immense amount of pressure to your opponent, especially if you combine it with a powerful low mount. With this pressure, you can use your underhooks to push your opponent's arms up around his head, à la Jake Shields versus A.J. Agazarm at Polaris. From there, armbars and arm triangles are yours for the taking.

LOW TO HIGH MOUNT

CROSS COLLAR GRIP

Like any other position in jiu-jitsu, every grip comes with its pros and cons. While the low mount grips we've looked at already can get you the finish, they are difficult to maintain as you transition into high guard. Some grips and mount positions, however, work just as well in low mount and in high mount, making them especially versatile.

The most traditional grip to pursue in mount is the cross collar grip. It allows you to apply cross face pressure (limiting the amount your opponent can move) while simultaneously threatening a choke and armlocks, and you can maintain that threat from low and high mount.



DOUBLE WRIST CONTROL

This position is less common in sport jiu-jitsu, but it is still fairly popular in an MMA context when you are more likely to work for strikes from mount instead of hunting a submission. When you control the wrists, you can sneak in elbow strikes without ever releasing your grips, and you can trick your opponent into moving his elbows out of position, which might create an opening to transition into high mount, or if you're already in mount, give you the opening you need to secure the armbar.

OVERHOOK MOUNT

Achieving an overhook in guard is a well-known advantage, but when it comes to mount, many jiu-jiteiros overlook its potential. In MMA, your opponent might opt to give you the overhook in an attempt to hug you close and prevent strikes. In gi or no-gi, your opponent might be more stubborn about keeping his elbows in. In either scenario, having the overhook is a huge advantage! You can attack the neck with collar chokes, you can swoop in for mounted triangles, you can crank the straight armbar, or you can drop into an omoplata on the overhooked arm. And like the cross collar grip, you can use this control in low or high mount.

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CLASSIC TECHNICAL MOUNT

This position is a classic jiu-jitsu staple. When your opponent turns on to his side, you adjust your leg position to negate the power of his shrimp. When you have technical mount, you get the best of mount and back control in one position. Almost any attack you have available in either position is available in technical mount. In the most basic version of technical mount, your primary goal is to trap your opponent on his side, so your hands will grip his bottom arm to prevent him from bellying-down while your legs keep him from returning to his back. This position can work well from low mount as well as high mount.

GIFTWRAP TECHNICAL MOUNT

The giftwrap–controlling your opponent's wrist from behind his head–is one of the most dominant grips in jiu-jitsu no matter where you get it. From technical mount, having the giftwrap almost guarantees a successful transition to the back. It creates an opening for devastating strikes, and you can switch off to arm triangle chokes or armbars. If you are using a higher technical mount, you might be able to thread your leg through for a mounted triangle as well.

HIGH MOUNT

BASIC HIGH MOUNT

Traditional high mount is when you set your knees underneath your opponent's shoulders. When you are sitting this high, you will barely feel the force of the bridge, and your opponent's elbows are so far out of position that armbars are ripe for the taking. Because of those advantages, high mount is one of the most dominant positions in jiu-jitsu, especially if you can strike. Even if you can't, your positioning has advanced to the point that your opponent is mostly counting on you to make a mistake so that he can escape.

S-MOUNT

When you get to high mount and then set S-mount, you are typically taking a slow and methodical approach to securing the armbar. S-mount in its own right is incredibly devastating. It creates a surprising amount of pressure–pitting your weight and leg squeeze against your opponent's diaphragm (you win this fight). Though the armbar is the primary option from S-mount, you can also potentially set up a collar choke and maybe switch to the back, depending on how your opponent chooses to run from the armbar.

Armed with this new vocabulary, we hope that you won't underestimate the potential of the mount position. You have a variety of options and grips to experiment with, and every threat you make from mount could open a path to the back. Start working on your mount today!

CHAMPION REDEFINED

The Art of the Armbar

WORDS & PHOTOS: **PATRICK FLORES**

"To create something exceptional, your mindset must be relentlessly focused on the smallest detail."
-Giorgio Armani

AS A PHOTOGRAPHER, IT IS MY JOB TO OBSERVE. THE MOMENT MY INDEX FINGER IS IN RANGE OF THE SHUTTER, EVERY DETAIL OF MY SETTING BECOMES SIGNIFICANT. The shade of someone's socks, the profile of a chair, the direction they choose to comb their hair, or even the luster of a button - all help to tell a little part of a much bigger story. It is for this reason I believe 6-time World Champion Rafael Mendes would be a good photographer. He will tell you himself that he suffers from a bit of obsessive-compulsive disorder, or OCD. From routinely checking that every inch of the white AOJ mats are spotless, to making sure every student's training is going well, Rafa likes things organized and perfect. This same attentiveness occurs in Rafa's development and execution of jiu-jitsu.

As any YouTube search of Rafa Mendes' fights will show you, the utilization of flowing movements is key to his jiu-jitsu style. Although some of his opponents also hold the rank of black belt, it is clear that Rafa is on another level, leaving the audience astonished. Could this be due to natural talent? Yes, but often-in sports we see talent can only take you so far. This, however, is not the case with Rafa. As the meticulous younger brother of Gui Mendes, his style varies a little bit. Although they share similar concepts, Rafa's approach is less persistent. As he mentions to us, he puts a lot of effort into the details of a technique. Along with his attention to detail, Rafa often uses the word "vision". He has a clear idea of where he wants to be.

RAW DATA
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Lineage:
Mitsuyo Maeda > Carlos Gracie > Carlson Gracie > Andre Pederneiras > Ramon Lemos > Rafael Mendes

MAIN ACHIEVEMENTS:
- World Champion (2016, 2015, 2014, 2012, 2011, 2010)
- ADCC Champion (2009, 2011)
- Pan American Champion (2012, 2011)
- European Champion (2014, 2010, 2009)
- Jiu Jitsu World Pro Cup Champion (2010, 2009)
- Brazilian National Champion (2010)

FAVORITE POSITION/TECHNIQUE: Leg-Drag Guard Pass and Berimbolo
WEIGHT DIVISION: Peso Pena (70kg – 154lbs)
TEAM/ASSOCIATION: Atos Jiu-Jitsu

"AS ANY YOUTUBE SEARCH OF RAFA MENDES' FIGHTS WILL SHOW YOU, THE UTILIZATION OF FLOWING MOVEMENTS IS KEY TO HIS JIU-JITSU STYLE."

GETTING TO KNOW RAFA

Are you going to do No-Gi Worlds this year?

No, I'm going to take a little break. For the last six months I was just training non-stop. During that time I've been contacted to do many seminars, so I'll be traveling and doing that.

You do strength and condition training. Do you do anything additional to supplement jiu-jitsu?

Actually 95% of my training is jiu-jitsu. The strength and conditioning I do is mainly to help my grips. When I was living in Brazil I was lifting a lot of weights and circuit training. Now, I try to do more specific things to jiu-jitsu like using the gi for pull-ups. Other exercises too but a lot of it is for grip strength. I'm always paying attention to grips.

You're 27 now, how do your hands feel?

My grips feel strong. A lot of people complain that their fingers and hands hurt. I never really had this problem. I think it's because I'm always training my grips. I keep them strong.

You have really unique footwork. There's a preciseness, especially, when you're passing guard. Do you attribute this to anything?

I do a lot of drills and a lot of effort goes into developing a flowing game. I like artistic jiu-jitsu. I want people to see me fight and be like, "Wow." Of course I want to win, that's the goal, but I also want people to be amazed. I put a lot of effort into footwork and the way I move. Ever since I started focusing on footwork, balance, and body coordination, my jiu-jitsu got way better. I think one of the reasons I never got hurt real badly is because of the way I fight. The way I fight is very technique oriented, trying to flow, and never fight something too hard. It helps my body.

With the latest trend in MMA and other sports seems to be movement coaches, have you given them much thought?

I think it's cool and watch some stuff online, but I have no one teaching me. I try to be creative and come up with different exercises with my brother. We try to find out what works for jiu-jitsu and use similar concepts.

When you teach the kids program at AOJ, do you follow the same concepts?

The concepts are the same but the way we teach them is a little different. For example, you can't show that many details for a kid that is three years old. We try to build them up because we only have their attention for so long. So, we show them little bits and give them more as they progress.

AOJ has been open since 2012. What has the business experience been like for you?

It's a dream come true. We knew we always had the potential. I think the reason we've been so successful is we had a vision. If you have a clear vision and [are] organized, you can make that vision a reality. For sure it was scary, but we were able to learn and adapt very fast. We were also blessed to have

the help of a lot of people.

You had some help from guys like Pat Tenore, the founder of RVCA. How did you guys meet?

When I met Pat he was a brown belt. In 2007, we were 17 and came to America for the first time as purple belts. We met him at a jiu-jitsu school and got to know him. He invited us to RVCA and started a relationship. At this point it was more of a sponsor relationship. We would come back to America several times a year to compete and got to know him more and more. We got to know his family and eventually we had something more than a business relationship. He also helped us move to the U.S.

You've done a lot with AOJ.

Was there an inspiration?

My brother and I, we had a vision of how we wanted our school. In Brazil, jiu-jitsu is very different. It's more of a fight club. We also traveled everywhere so we got the opportunity to see how other schools were doing business and teaching. When we decided to open our school, we didn't know what to do. We did, however, know what not to do. There was no secret formula. We started to adjust things for the good for the academy and the students. As far as the design, Pat helped us. He has very good taste.

You have interest in different aspects of business. Do you have any interest to pursue business ventures outside of jiu-jitsu?

There are a bunch of different opportunities. For right now, AOJ has my attention. We have a lot of growth and want to expand. We want to keep building the brand and showing our vision. Priority now is to expand AOJ. In the future, I may keep doing more stuff. I would definitely like to do something in the future.

Do you have any advice for students looking to become the next Mendes Brothers?

A lot of people say you have to work hard. But only working hard will not let you achieve all your goals. I think there is more than that. I think my brother and I are unique because we were organized and had a vision. To win in a competition, training hard is maybe enough. To use your accomplishments and have a good business to provide for your family requires more than just training hard.

What's the first thin you ate after winning your 6th world title?

In-N-Out. I love sushi though. I don't cut that much weight but I was still eating sushi. I would have felt guilty eating In-N-Out though (laughs).

Where do you see yourself in 10 or even 20 years?

I don't plan to still be competing but I want to have an AOJ in every major city, still working in jiu-jitsu, and teaching. I also want to spend as much time as I can with my family.

Six Techniques from Six Time World Champ Rafa Mendes

ARMBAR FROM DLR GUARD

You will often find Rafa in the De La Riva guard. In this position there are many sweeps and submissions available. Although some athletes grab the gi, Rafa prefers to grab the ankle. This guard is great, as it will limit your opponent's mobility and is great for breaking posture.

STEP 1

Rafa starts with the classic DLR guard with one foot on the bicep. He grabs the same collar as the side he is grabbing the ankle. He then moves the foot from the bicep to his opponent's inner thigh.

STEP 2

Next, Rafa will break his opponent's posture by pulling the collar down and away, pulling up on the ankle, and pushing on the inner thigh.

STEP 3

Rafa then releases the grip on the ankle and begins to move to attack the arm. He rotates his body over his opponents arm, similar to a belly down armbar position. While in rotation, he also releases the collar grip in favor of his opponent's wrist, transferring his hip to the opposite side of his opponent's arm.

STEP 4

He then transfers the leg previously pushing on the inner thigh to a hook and places his other leg on his opponent's neck to roll them into an armbar position. From there, pull back on the arm while applying forward pressure with your hips.

COLLAR DRAG TO ARMBAR

If you tried the first technique and are having trouble breaking your opponent's posture, you might want to give this a try. It uses similar grips as the previous position and with a similar finish.

STEP 1

Starting from DLR, with the same side collar grip as the ankle, Rafa escapes his hips back, releasing the ankle grip, and coming up on his elbow. He still maintains the grip on the collar.

STEP 2

He shifts his hips away while pulling the collar back and out to perform a collar drag. The goal of this is to force your opponent to release any grips they may have and post their hands to prevent a sweep.

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STEP 3

From here, your opponent's posture is broken in a similar way as the previous position. Transfer your grips to your opponent's wrist and use the same downward pressure on your opponent's neck and torso to flip your opponent into an armbar position.

STEP 4

Once your opponent is on their back, apply forward pressure with your hips while pulling back on the wrist to finish with the armbar. Make sure that their thumb is pointed away and that your hips are below their elbow.

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BELLY DOWN ARMBAR FROM OPEN GUARD

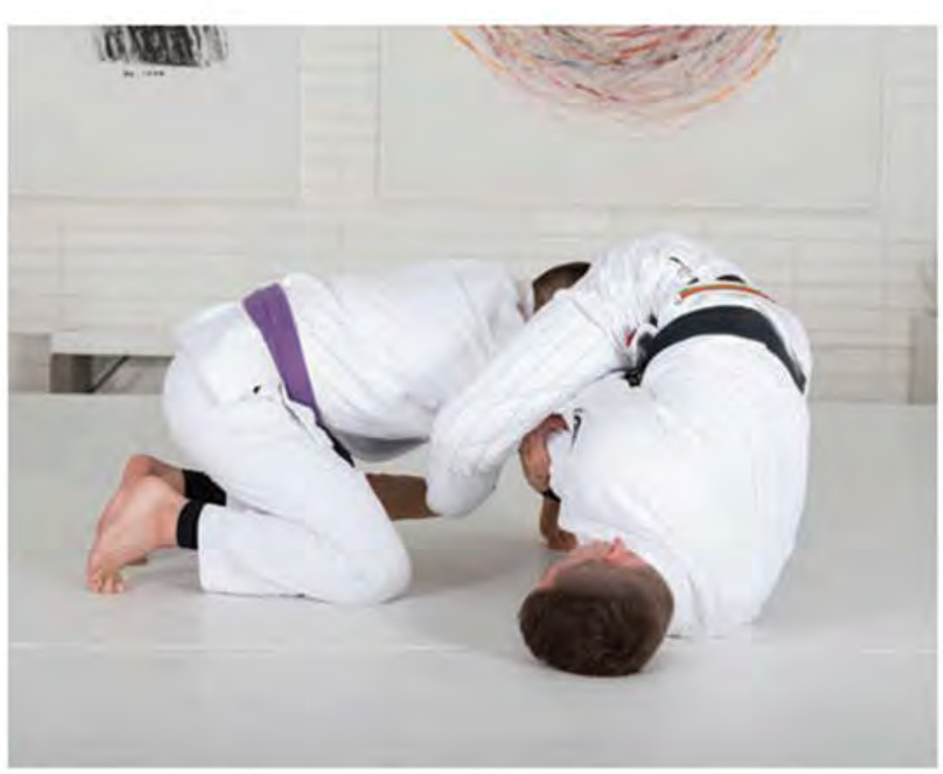
When playing DLR, you will often transition in and out of other guards. When you get caught in an open guard, think about quickly slapping on this submission on one of your opponents for a quick finish.

STEP 1

From the open guard position, Rafa gets to his side. From here he can get an underhook and pull his opponent to him using the hook and collar grip.

STEP 2

Using his left foot on the mat, Rafa rolls his left shoulder to the mat while bridging towards his opponent.



STEP 3

Once elevated, he feeds his right leg between his opponent's arm and leg to hook his torso.

STEP 4

Rafa continues the momentum by continuing to roll to his right until his right shoulder is on the mat. At this point his left leg is pressuring down his opponent's trapped shoulder.

STEP 5

To finish the armbar, Rafa uses his bottom hand to grip the wrist while using his top hand to force his opponent's hand up. He makes sure his opponent's elbow is positioned at his thigh as his leg brings pressure down to create the necessary leverage for the position.

HELICOPTER ARMBAR

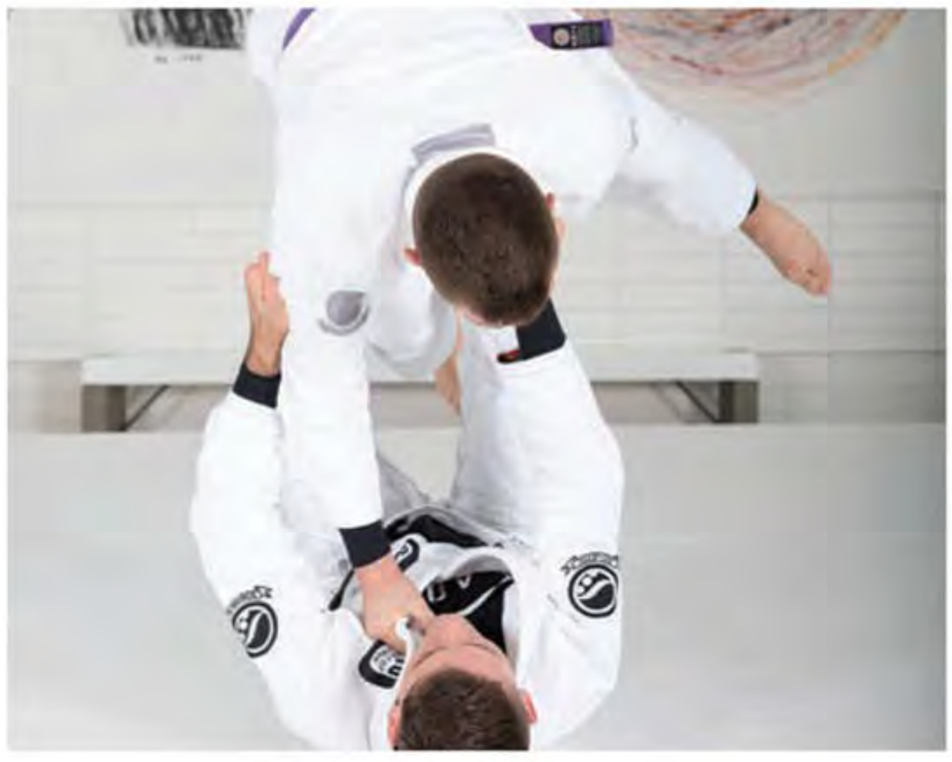
This technique not only looks really cool, it incorporates into the DLR armbar sequence we're showing in this article. Land one of these in competition and hope that someone recorded it.

STEP 1

Rafa starts in DLR guard with his foot on the hip. Notice that for this technique Rafa's hand is gripping the opposite side collar of the ankle grip. He comes up to his opponent and transfers their weight down to the foot on the hip.

STEP 2

In a quick motion he lifts his opponent off the ground.



One of the coolest moves in all of jiu-jitsu.

STEP 3

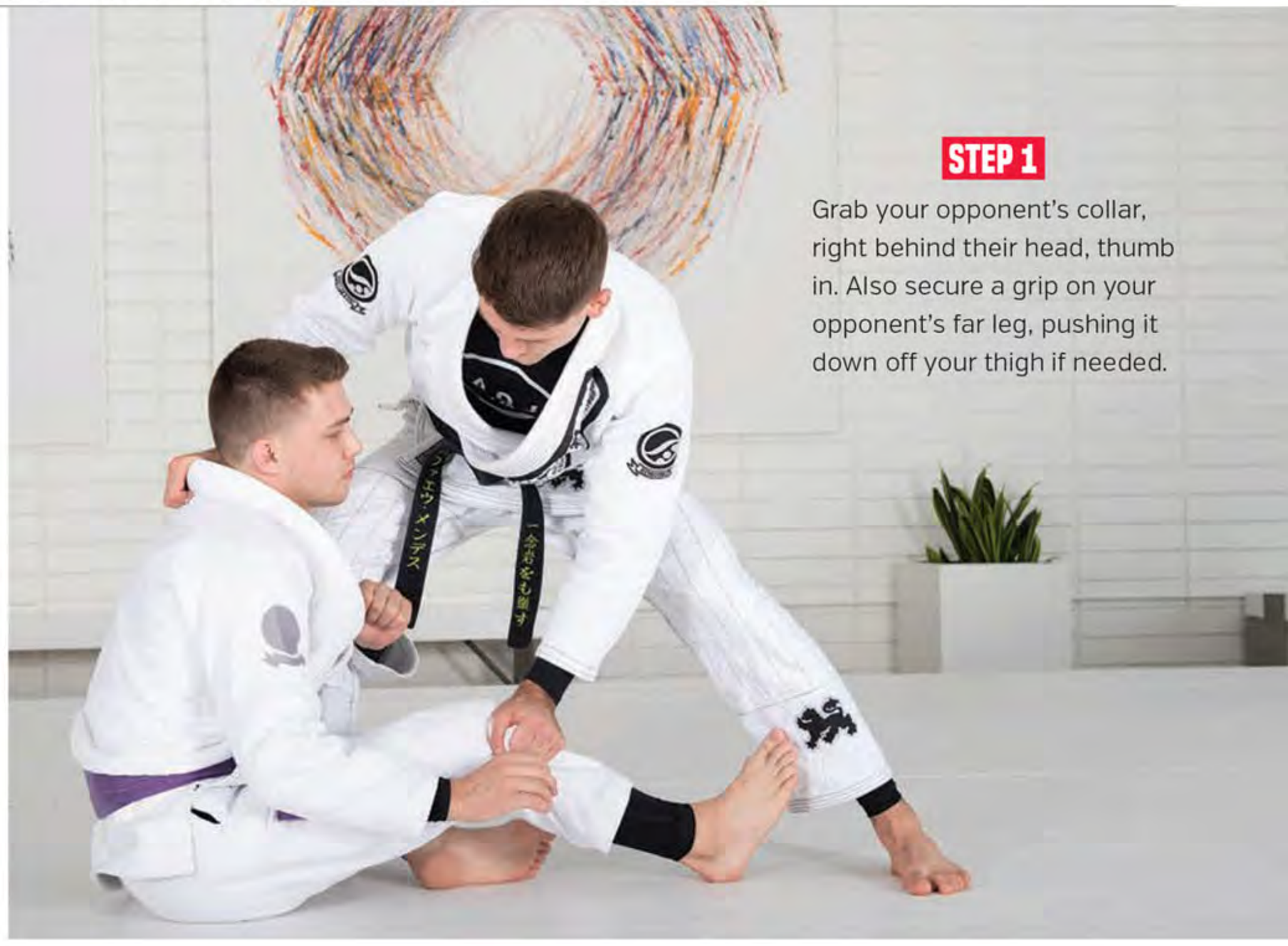
What comes up must go down. Once Rafa shifts the foot on his opponent's hip, gravity will naturally bring them back to the ground. As they fall, Rafa transfers his legs to a traditional armbar position, one leg over the head, and the other over the belly.

STEP 4

By the time your opponent hits the ground, the armbar ideally will be set in place for a speedy finish.

PASS TO OMOPLATA

Use this pass when your opponent sits up in DLR to hug your leg. This is where footwork drills can really benefit you.



STEP 1

Grab your opponent's collar, right behind their head, thumb in. Also secure a grip on your opponent's far leg, pushing it down off your thigh if needed.

STEP 2

Free the trapped leg by moving it to the outside of your opponent's legs while still maintaining your grips.

STEP 3

Take a back step with your far leg so you become perpendicular to your opponent.

STEP 4

Move your far leg closer to your opponent's head while maintaining your weight over their body and control of their left arm.

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STEP 5

While in motion, transfer one grip to your opponent's arm and the other to the ground to create a solid base.

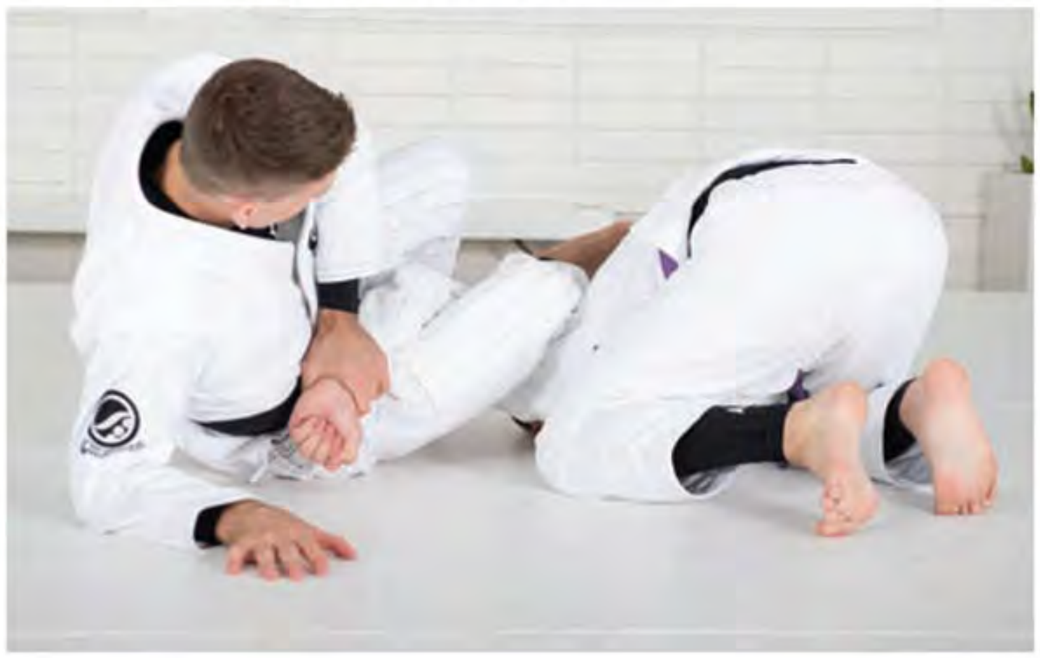
STEP 6

From here you can begin to roll your opponent into an omoplata.

VARIATION

STEP 7

Should the omoplata fail, the technique can be adjusted to an armbar. Rafa moves his hip out and secures wrist and arm control, keeping his legs tight.



STEP 8

Rafa uses his top leg as a way to prevent his opponent from mounting any sort of escape either by blocking or hooking the leg.

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LEG DRAG TO ARMBAR

STEP 1

To start the leg drag pass, Rafa quickly circles his opponent's legs to one side. Instead of grabbing the pants, he holds the ankles, directing them to one direction.

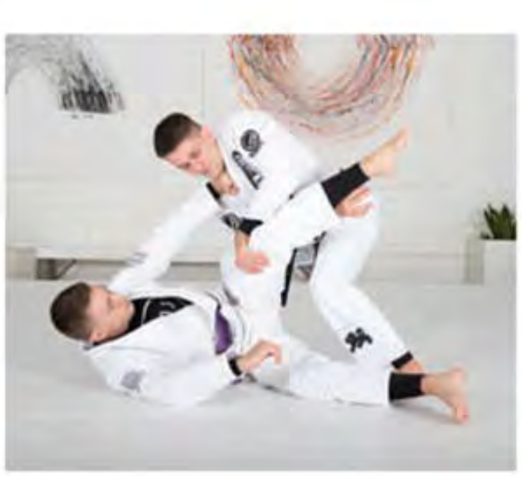
STEP 2

Rafa uses his right hand to circle underneath his opponent's left leg and direct it across his body.

STEP 5

Once his right leg is in front of his opponent, he posts his left knee on the mat and uses both legs to keep his opponent in position so that he can pull back on the captured arm for the armbar.

If Rafa is unable to finish with the armbar with one hand, he can commit both and go full belly down or attack with a wrist lock.



STEP 3

Once you pass your opponent's legs, your opponent will naturally try to block with their arms. This exposes them to an armbar.

STEP 4

While controlling the arm, Rafa brings his right leg up and over his opponent while at the same time falling to his left side and basing with his left hand on the mat.

PARTING WORDS

Rafa's style is very unique to say the least. Some would call it modern jiu-jitsu, or young man's jiu-jitsu. The truth is that the Mendes Brothers' style is not conducive for everyone. It's a different way of solving the same problem. Rafa wants his jiu-jitsu to be a work of art. This shows in his execution. His attention to detail in his body movements allows him to flow through his opposition like water.

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IT'S A BACKPACK; NO, IT'S A DUFFLE; NO, IT'S A BACKPACK, NO, IT'S A DUFFLE... THIS CONVERSATION COULD GO ON IN YOUR HEAD FOREVER AFTER YOU CHECK OUT THE NEW CHAMP "BACKPACK" FROM MANTO. IT'S A _____ [CHOOSE BETWEEN DUFFEL BAG OR BACKPACK] THAT CONVERTS TO A _____ [WHICHEVER CHOICE YOU DIDN'T CHOOSE BEFORE]. According to Manto, it's a backpack, so we'll go with that. They call it a "multifunctional masterpiece", and after using it for a few weeks, we couldn't agree more.

WHAT IT IS

The Champ Backpack is a 30 liter [this is how bag capacity is measured, who knew?] bag that's longer in length than most 30L backpacks. That's because it easily converts into a duffel bag. It's made of durable polyester fabric that's machine washable. As a duffel bag, there are two handles to hold onto, one on the side and one at the top. The top of the duffel uses two facing zippers so that you can move the open point around. Because it functions as a duffel bag, the zippers can open up all the way around with the exception of the fabric hinge portion that runs along one side of the bag. Adjustable molded snap buckles close to secure the bag and keep it from accidently opening.

When it's time to go full-backpack, just unzip the seam along the padded bottom or back, depending on how you look at it, and two padded back straps emerge. Clip them onto the corresponding eyelets at the bottom and you have yourself a backpack. Two pockets, one at the top and one at the bottom, are sized perfectly for a mouth guard, belt, wallet, phone, or any small accessory. One of the pockets is accessible from inside the bag as well as through a zipper. This is convenient when you have the bag completely open.

Another feature includes a side pocket that's walled off from the inside of the bag. It's small but can also be used to put soiled items or clean items you want to keep away from the main compartment.

Speaking of the main compartment, it's pretty roomy- there's enough space to squeeze two complete gis or one complete gi with room for spats, rashguard, water bottle, and all the other accoutrements that a grappler sometimes requires.

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USING IT

My first run in with the Champ was on my trip to Santa Cruz to cover the BJJ Tour All-Star event. Although I didn't compete, I did need to pack away two days worth of clothing, toiletries, and copies of Jiu-Jitsu Magazine of course. I used it primarily as a duffel and it worked great- no complaints, plenty of room for everything I needed. When I got back home, I continued to use the Champ but this time to transport my gis and gear to and from class. For this task I used both the duffel and the backpack function and found myself going with the backpack more often than not. When using the Champ as a backpack, I kept the molded buckles snapped together the entire time. This made it easier to access the inside of the bag without having to lay it flat like a duffel. Even fully loaded with a heavy, wet gi, water, and some other stuff, the backpack is comfortable and easy to put on completely or just slung over my shoulder by one strap.

During testing, I broke one of my own rules, I forgot one of my wet sweaty gis in the bag overnight. The next day when I discovered my oversight, my nose paid the price. The Champ seals up pretty well and doesn't vent at all. So be sure to remove your dirty gis quickly. That fact that the bag is completely machine washable is a nice feature.

VERDICT

VERDICT

Convenient and Priced Right

PERFORMANCE	★★★★½	**QUALITY**	★★★★½
VALUE	★★★★★	**OVERALL**	★★★★½

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- Measures: 23" long by 12" wide by 10" tall at the highest point.
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CONCLUSION

A good quality backpack can run you quite a bit these days. The Champ is available for $49.95 from Manto's website and other retailers. Given its versatility and quality, that price is a bargain. I was expecting it to sell for more. The Champ backpack from Manto is convenient, perfect for jiu-jitsu gear, or even a weekend getaway.

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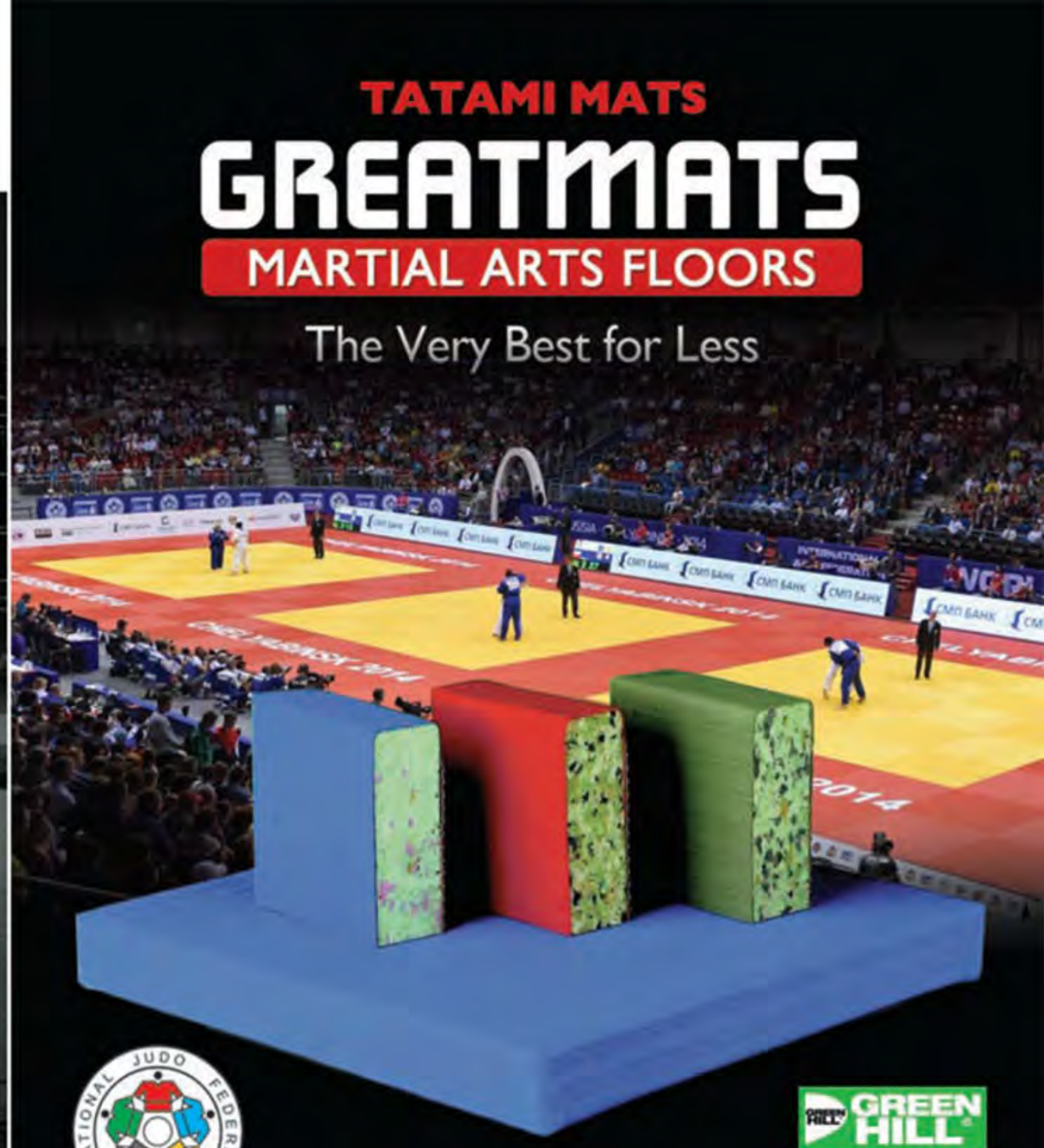

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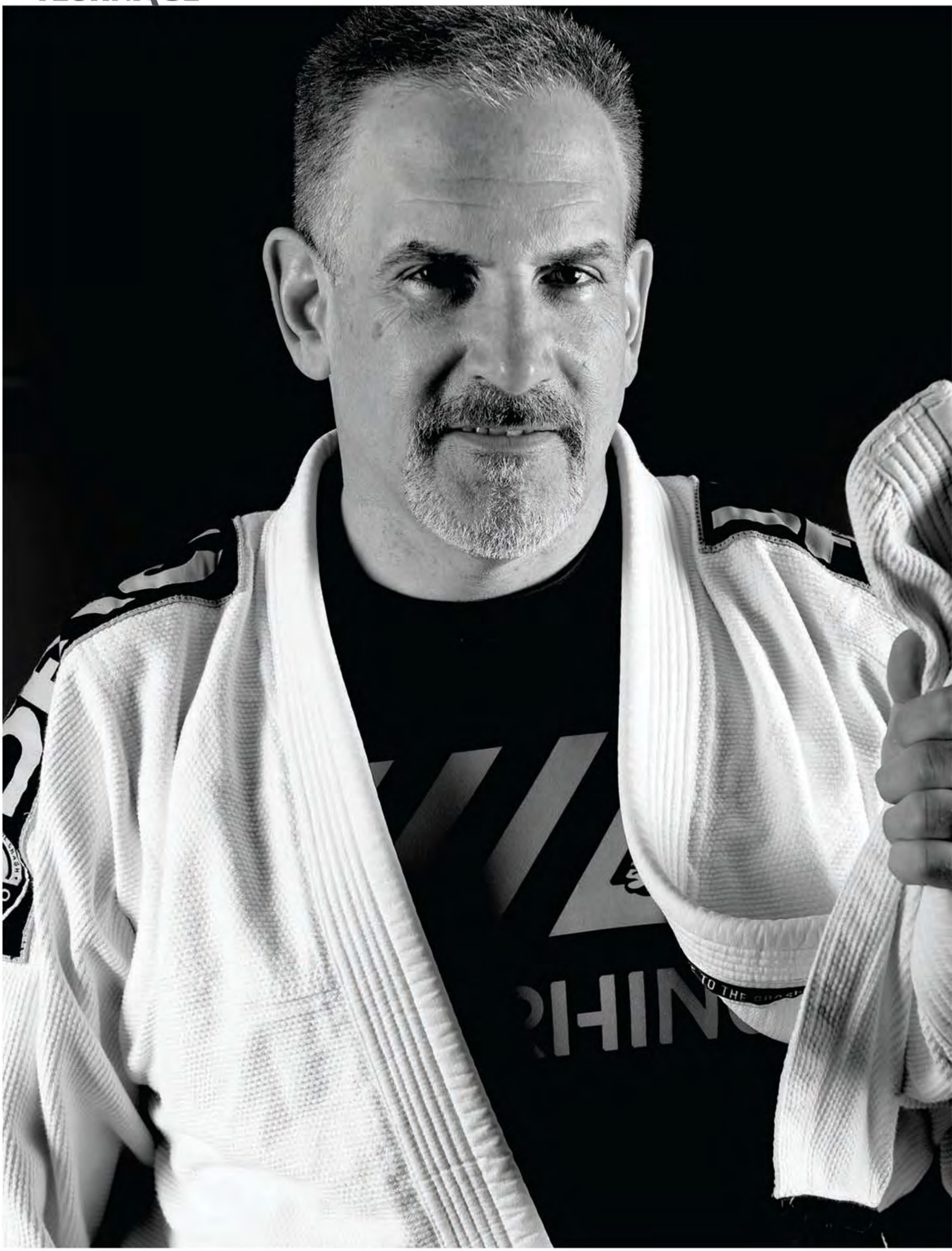


THE LAPEL CHOKE

WITH KEITH OWEN

Never Look at a Lapel the Same Again!

WORDS: **STAFF** | PHOTOS: **PATRICK FLORES**

KEITH OWEN IS THE FIRST TO ADMIT THAT HIS JIU-JITSU IS BEST KNOWN FOR SELF-DEFENSE. A PEDRO SAUER BLACK BELT, OWEN'S STYLE AND INSTRUCTIONAL FOCUS STAYS TRUE TO THE HELIO GRACIE LINEAGE THAT DEFINES THE TRAINING PHILOSOPHY OF THE PEDRO SAUER ASSOCIATION. Like most of Sauer's black belts, however, Owen's technical knowledge goes far beyond the classic self-defense curriculum and incorporates a variety of sport innovations as well.

Owen loves the lapel choke and has devised ways to make this classic sport technique more effici t and more effective with unique setups and pinpoint details for execution. With the advancement of positions like the lapel guard and worm guard, Owen's instruction is a reminder that jiu-jiteiros have been leveraging the power of the lapel for years and that you shouldn't underestimate the grizzled veterans of the sport. Instructors like Owen might say he puts self-defense first, but his bag of tricks runs deep.

Find out more about many of the moves Keith demonostrates here on his *Lights Out Volume II* DVD or at at **bjjmoves.com.**

RHINO LAPEL CHOKE FROM GUARD

In this technique, Owen demonstrates a small piece of his lapel choke system. As far as jiu-jitsu innovations go, lapel chokes aren't groundbreaking. They have been a part of the game for some time. Owen, however, takes a unique approach that most grapplers probably have not seen.

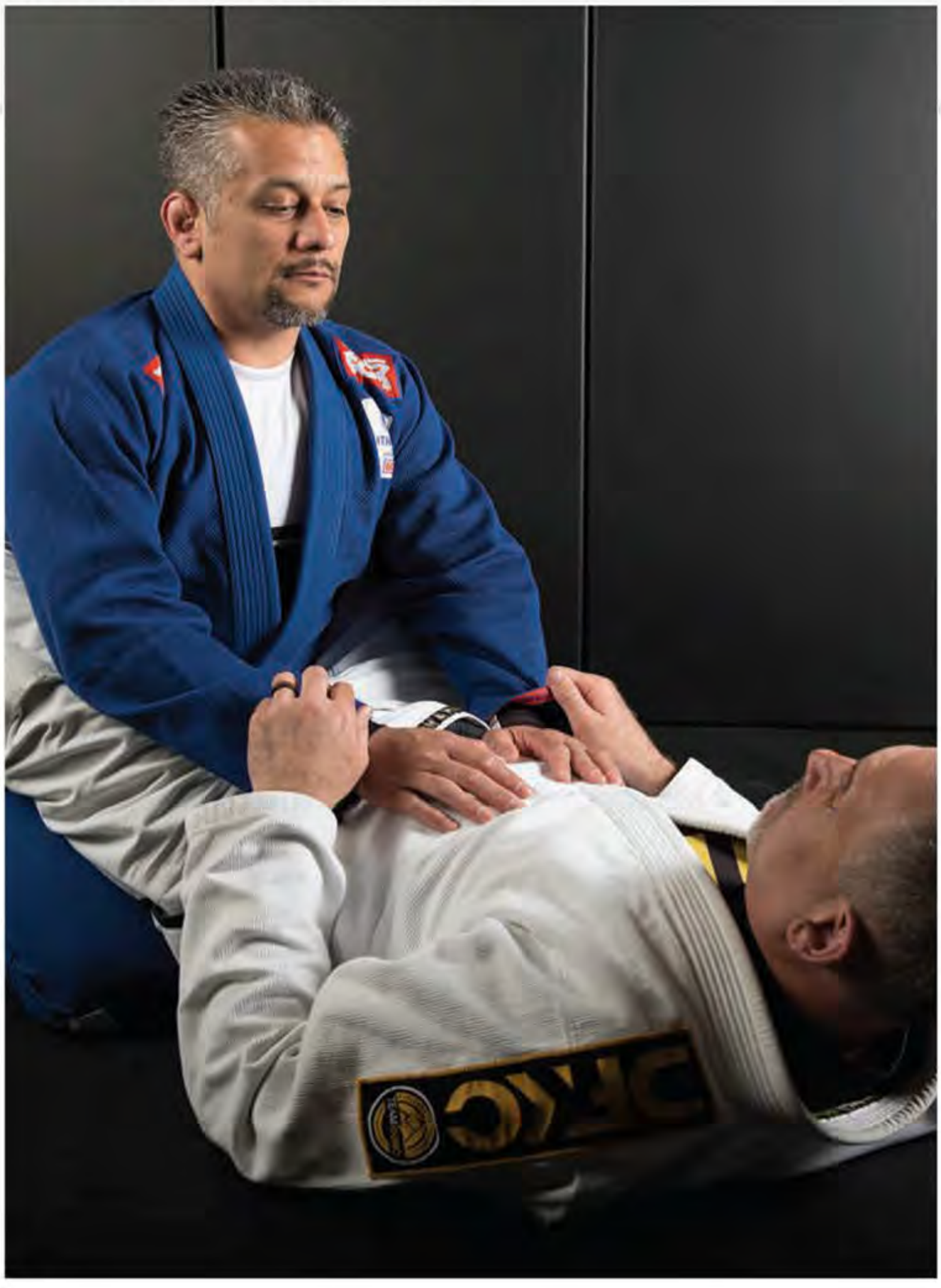
Owen breaks his lapel choke into two independent stages: the set-up and the finish.

That sounds like it might apply to every submission in the history of jiu-jitsu, but this is different. The way Owen establishes lapel control from guard allows him to lay the groundwork for the choke and then come back to it later. He can simultaneously maintain a cross collar grip and the lapel grip, all while having a free hand to threaten any other attack that's possible from a cross collar grip–cross chokes, armbars, triangles, scissor sweeps, and so on. And as soon as he sees the opening, he can swoop in for the lapel choke.

And it all comes down to a subtle but powerful innovation in his cross collar grip. Read on to learn more.

STEP 1

Keith starts with Mike in his closed guard. Keith has control of Mike's sleeves but sees that Mike is starting to posture.

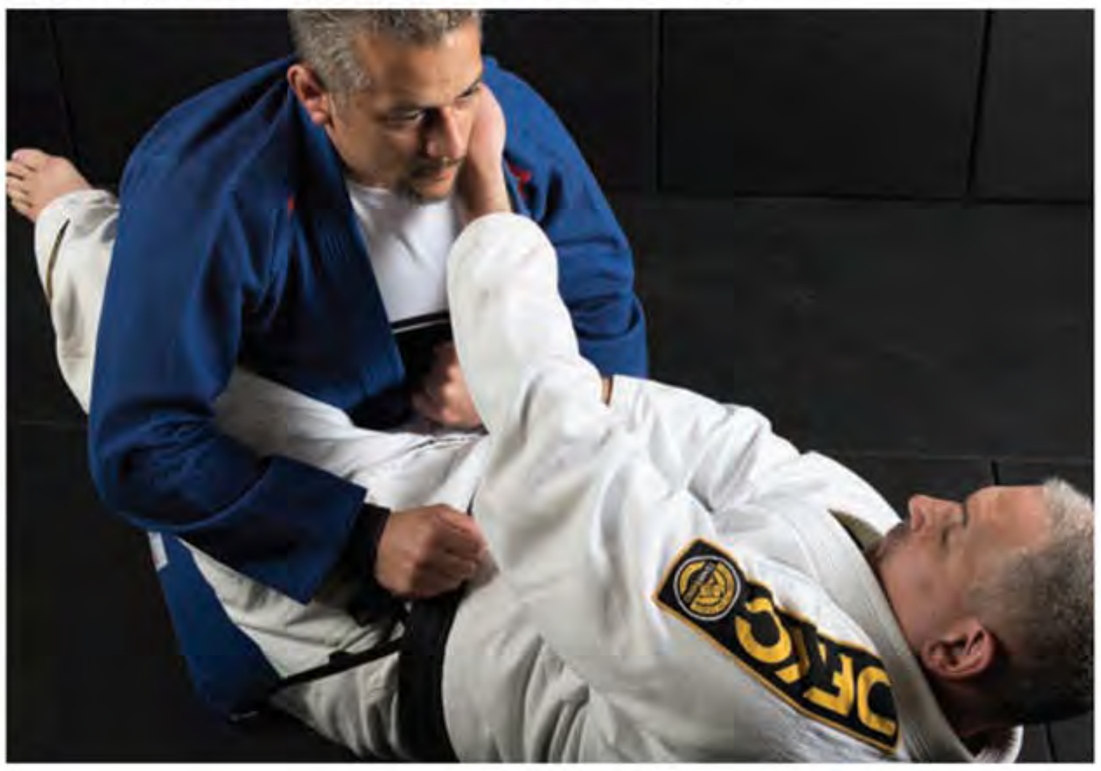


STEP 2

Keith shoots his left hand forward to secure a deep cross collar grip on Mike's lapel.

STEP 3

With his right hand, Keith starts to untuck Mike's left lapel. In real time application, Keith would distract Mike with his legs and his cross collar grip, forcing Mike to think about his balance while Keith stealthily untucked the lapel. Note that Keith is gripping Mike's lapel with his thumb down in this step.

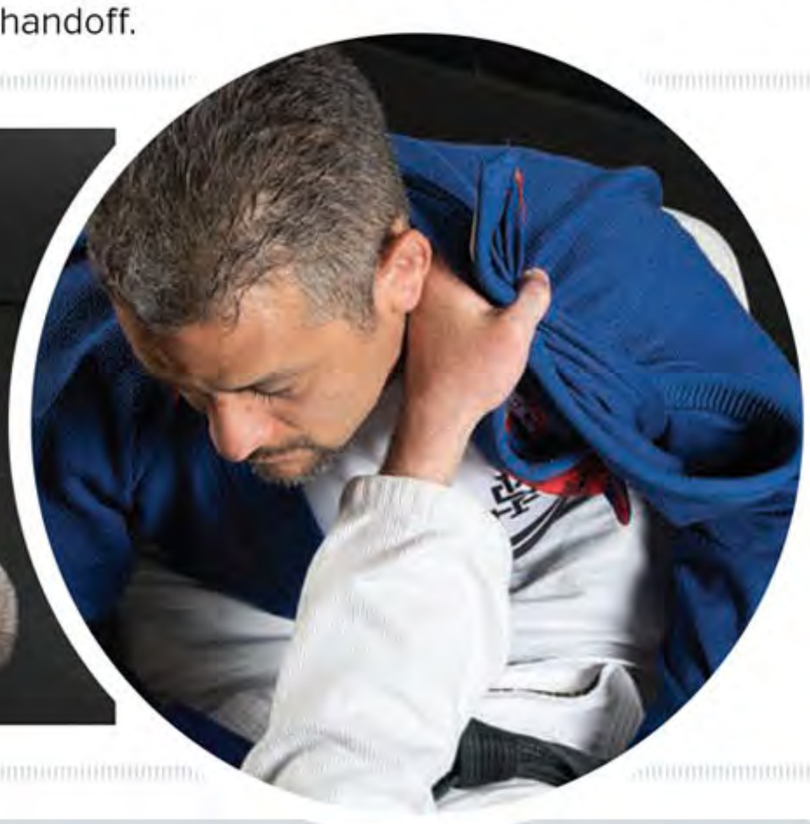


STEP 4

Keith pulls Mike's lapel toward him, using his thumb-up grip to set up a lapel handoff.

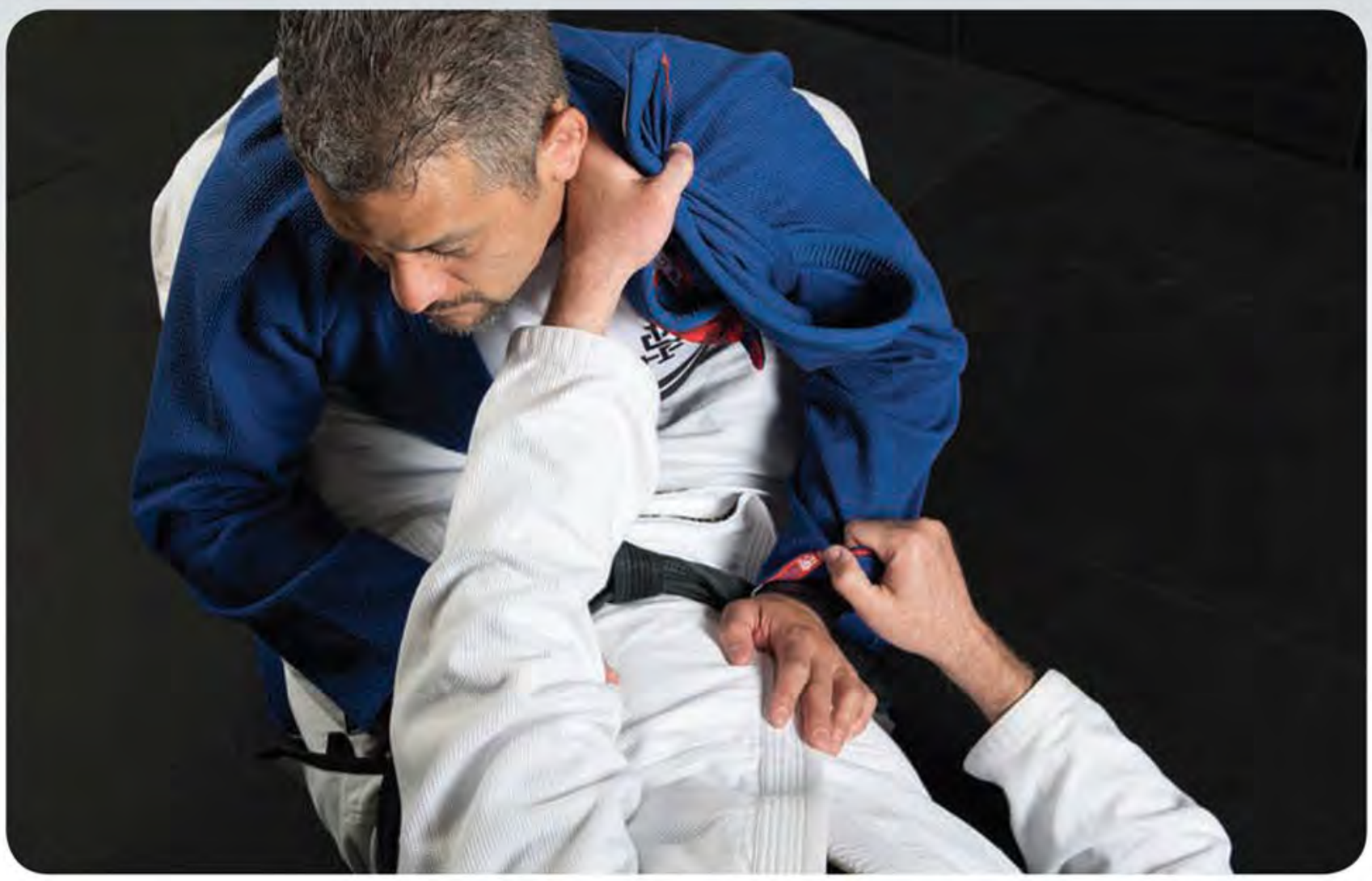
STEP 5

Keith passes Mike's lapel from his right hand to his left hand, catching the lapel with his thumb without releasing his collar grip. Now, Keith has two grips in one: a cross collar grip and a lapel control grip that his opponent might not even see. From here, Keith can threaten any cross collar attack he wants while waiting for the perfect moment to finish the lapel choke.



BONUS

With some clever grip fighting, Keith is able to set two grips in one: a cross collar grip and a lapel control grip, giving him access to dozens of attacks from one position.



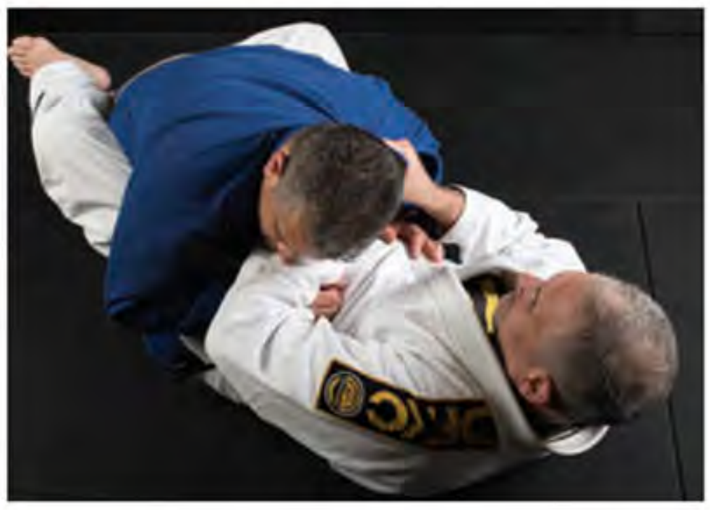
ALTERNATE GRIP FINISH

STEP 1

In this variation, Keith punches the lapel grip under and around Mike's left arm rather than pulling the lapel toward himself. The choke finish from this grip is exactly the same, but securing this grip might be more difficult if your opponent's lapels are a bit short.

STEP 2

Seeing that Mike has forgotten about protecting his neck, Keith moves to finish the lapel choke. He grabs Mike's lapel with his right hand using a thumb up grip.



STEP 3

Keith uses both hands to pull Mike down, collapsing his posture.

STEP 4

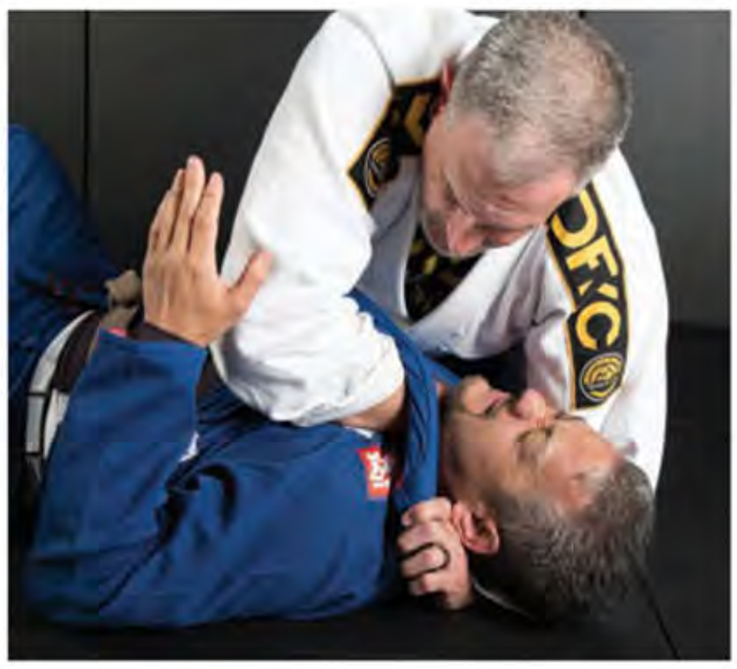
Keith flares his right elbow as he begins to twist his torso to his left, giving him the angle he needs to attack the right side of Mike's neck. Notice that Keith has opted to open his legs in this step for extra mobility.

STEP 5

Keith sets his right forearm against Mike's neck. The submission is already pretty tight.

STEP 6

Keith squares back up with Mike and pulls his elbows toward his own hips to set the choke and get the tap. If Mike postures hard to resist the choke, Keith can close his guard and scissor his legs for an alternate finish.



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LAPEL CHOKE FROM BACK MOUNT

At one time, double lapel control was the way to control and attack from the back. That approach has fallen out of vogue as the seatbelt has risen to prominence. To be clear, the seatbelt is extremely powerful and affords you a variety of options, but the old techniques are still effective. Double lapel grips from the back give you a great deal of control, and once you develop an affinity for attacking with the lapel, they set the stage for a powerful, fight-ending choke.

The foundation of this technique hinges on managing tension with your lapel grips. If you are gripping the lapels–whether with double lapel grips or with one lapel untucked as you look to set the choke-ratcheting up the tension on the fabric will slow your opponent as you work to set the choke.

Dig into the step-by-step breakdown to see how this control position sets you up for the finish.

LAPEL CHOKE FROM BACK MOUNT IN ACTION

STEP 1

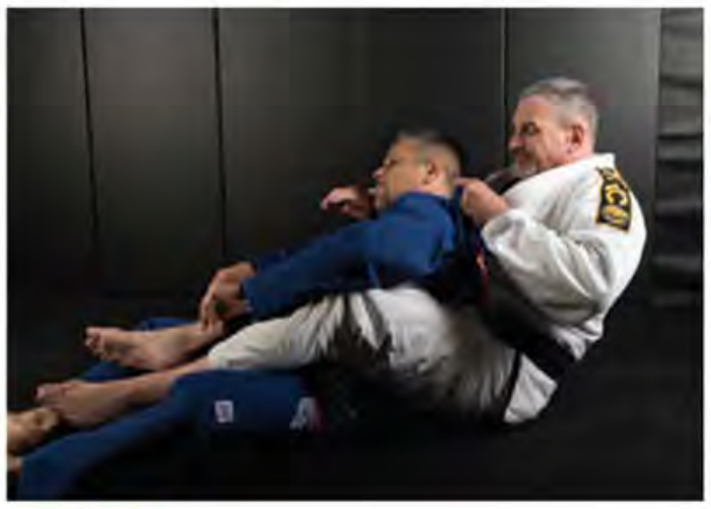
Keith has Mike's back and has secured double lapel control, reaching under Mike's armpits with both hands to grab his lapels.

STEP 2

Keith rows his elbows back toward his sides to put tension on Mike's lapel, immobilizing his upper body with the tension on the fabric.

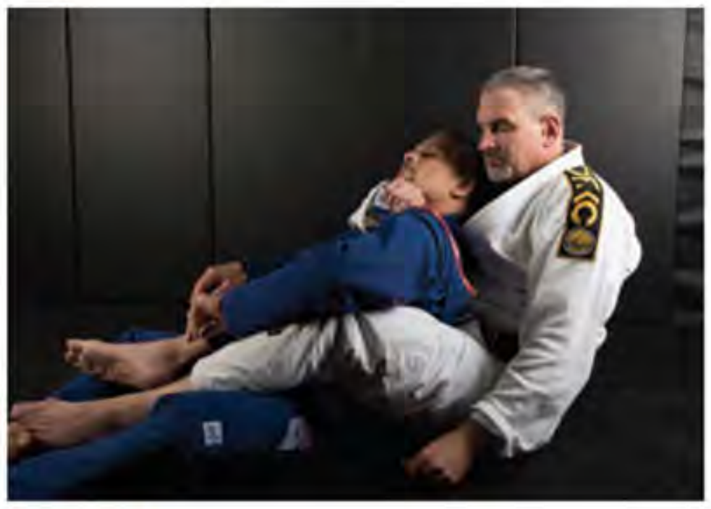
STEP 3

With his left hand, Keith untuck's Mike's left lapel, yanking it toward his hip. As long as Keith maintains tension here, he is not particularly worried about disguising his intentions.



STEP 4

With a thumb up grip, Keith uses his left hand to begin passing Mike's lapel up his back and over his shoulder. If Mike had started to defend the lapel grip in this step, Keith could use his left hand to threaten rear naked chokes or other collar chokes to create an opening for the lapel pass.



STEP 5

Keith hands Mike's lapel to his left hand and secures a strong grip, freeing his left hand to work for a finishing angle.

STEP 5

Keith grabs Mike's left leg at the knee and rotates himself toward the grip, using a bow and arrow choke angle to finish the choke. To create additional pressure, Keith points his right hand like he was holding a wand rather than allow his hand to contour around Mike's neck.

EZEKIEL FINISH

If Mike hides his leg from Keith's pant grip, Keith can shoot his left underhook up Mike's chest and set his left hand behind Mike's head. To finish the choke, Keith tucks his right elbow downward and extends his left arm to create pressure against the back of Mike's head. Tip: If you have trouble lacing your arm up under your opponent's arm, pull out and away with your arm (almost like you were trying to flag down a ride to hitchhike) before reaching upward toward the head.

ALTERNATIVE FINISH #2

If Mike is heavy on his right side, blocking Keith from taking the bow and arrow choke angle, he can lean his chest into Mike's back, free his left hook, and come up on to his elbow and grip the far lapel. To set the finish, Keith sets his left leg behind Mike's hips to minimize Mike's movement while he walks his right elbow backward and turns to create finishing pressure. Tip: Kick your leg to generate extra momentum to help you sit up.

BASEBALL BAT LAPEL CHOKE FROM SIDE CONTROL

In side control, when your opponent is flat on his back, securing the collar grips you need to finish a choke can feel like a dangerous game. With your own chest blocking the typical access points for collar chokes–right near your opponent's collar bones–you might think that you are better off abandoning collar chokes altogether and instead looking for armlocks or transitions to mount. With Owen's approach to lapel chokes, you can maintain much of your chest pressure while still fight for stronger grips.

Pressure and control are still key here but so are some subtle mind games. With the right grips, you can take your opponent's attention away from their neck while also creating the little bit of space you might need to untuck and manipulate their lapels. Once you have a lapel, you can use Keith's aggressive system to continue attacking even if your opponent tries to defend.

STEP 1

Keith starts on top of Mike in side control. Both of his arms are across Mike's body. Keith could technically execute this technique with his left rm controlling Mike's head, but manipulating the lapels tends to be easier from this position.

STEP 2

Keith allows Mike to pressure upward with his frame so that he can grab Mike's left rm with his right hand. As he cups Mike's left bi eps, he pulls his left elb w back over Mike's body as though he were doing a row. This grip gives him control and could make Mike think that he is in danger of being armbarred.

STEP 3

With his left h nd, Keith begins to untuck Mike's left l pel. Notice how Keith maintains pressure with his left hand grip.

STEP 4

Yanking the fabric of Mike's gi toward his head, Keith extends the lapel as far as possible. To set up his next grip without forfeiting control, Keith relaxes the index and pinky finger of his left h nd.

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STEP 5

Keith passes Mike's left lapel to his left hand, gripping the end of the lapel with two fingers of his left hand. Notice how Keith leaves the end of the lapel sticking upward for easy gripping later.

STEP 6

Keith leans to his right, sinking his weight down into his right forearm to create immense pressure on Mike's stomach. As he does that, he grabs Mike's lapel with his left hand, his palm facing down toward the mat.

STEP 7

Relieving his stomach pressure suddenly, Keith flares his left elbow open and violently begins to loop his arm around Mike's head without releasing his lapel grip.

STEP 8

Keith finishes the loop, securing a head control position with his lapel grip still intact.

STEP 9

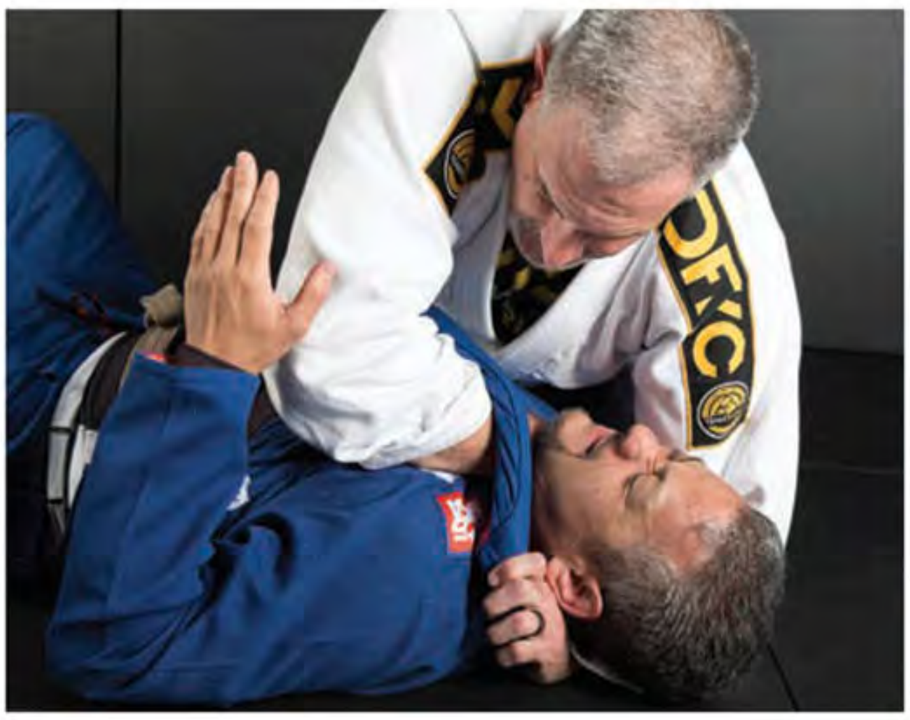
In one quick motion, Keith lifts his chest and shoots his right hand under the near side of Mike's head, reaching to pass the lapel from his left hand to his right hand.

STEP 10

As Keith completes the transfer, he leans his right shoulder into Mike's solar plexus, using the tension of his pulling with his right arm combined with the sinking of his weight to control Mike.

STEP 11

Without relieving the pressure that Keith established in the previous step, he flares his left elbow and swoops around Mike's head, looking to grab Mike's lapel as though he were holding a baseball bat.

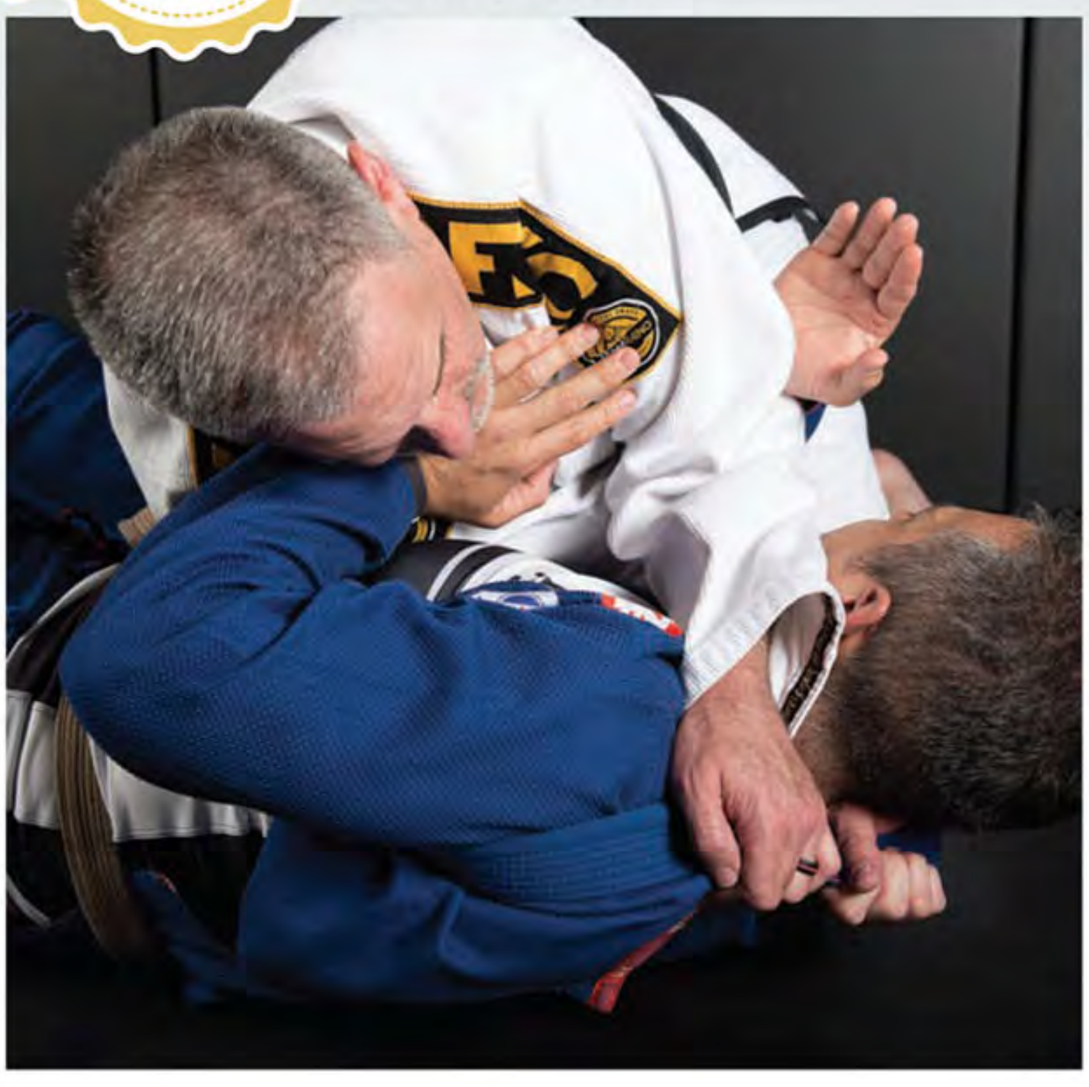


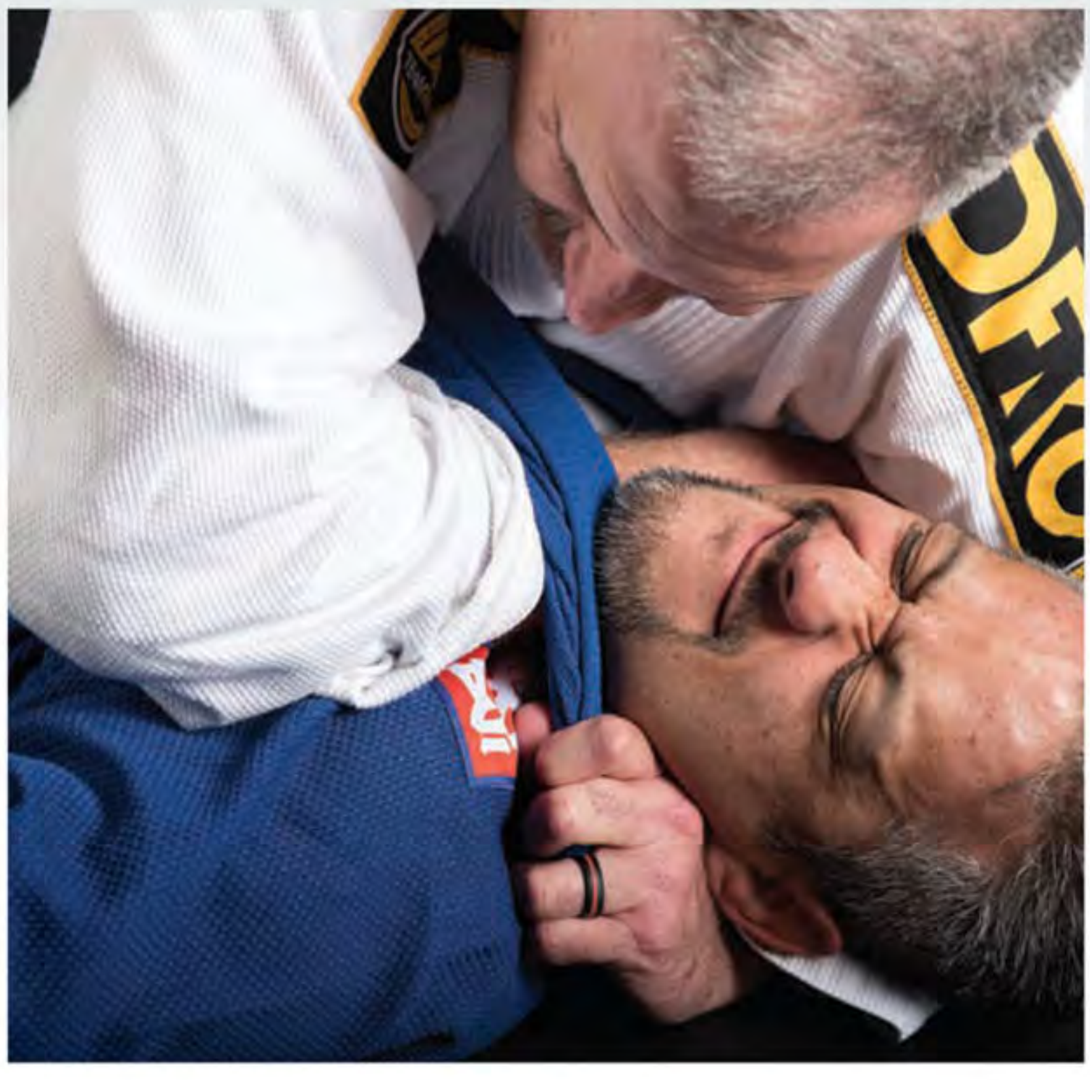
STEP 12

To finish the choke, Keith drops his left forearm onto Mike's neck, pinches his elbows together, and set his chest overtop of his arms, sinking his weight downward as he squeezes with his arms to eliminate space and create pressure for the finish.

BONUS

If your opponent insists on using a frame to attempt their side control escapes, you can use the lapel to set up a powerful baseball bat choke. If they retreat their hands to protect their neck, you can switch off to a sneaky Ezekiel choke.





ALTERNATE EZEKIEL FINISH

STEP 1

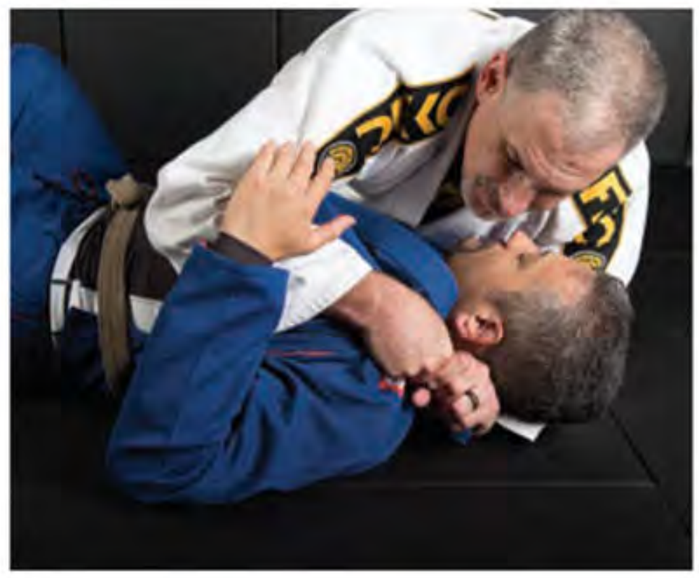
To execute the lapel handoff while maintaining head control, Keith hooks the crown of Mike's head with his left arm, forcing Mike's neck to bend toward his left shoulder. This allows Keith to efficiently close the space for the lapel grip.

STEP 2

Since Keith applied head pressure, however, Mike becomes more mindful of his neck and drops his left arm down to defend.

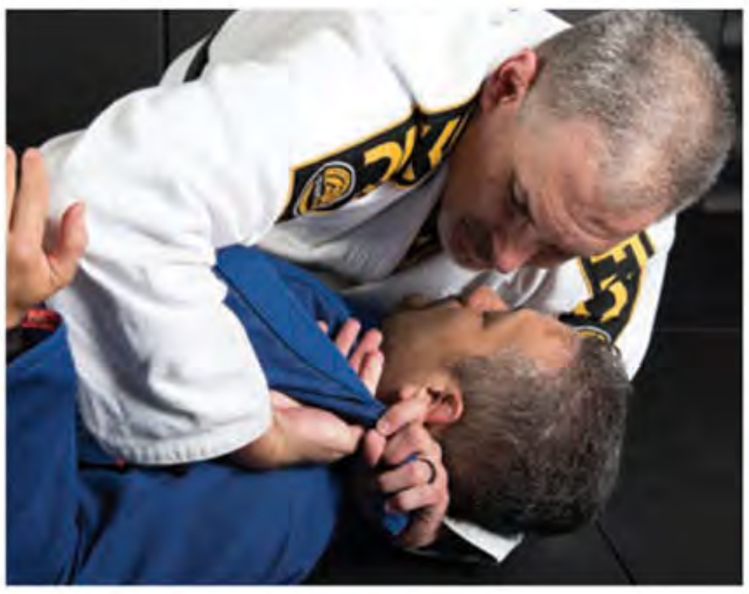
STEP 3

Keith changes tactics and shoots his left hand–which is still controlling Mike's lapel–under Mike's left arm and hands the lapel off to his left hand.



STEP 4

From there, Keith loops his left hand under the lapel, across Mike's neck, and extends his arms, punching his hands forward to finish the Ezekiel lapel choke.



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ALL-STAR

WORDS & PHOTOS: **MIKE VELEZ**

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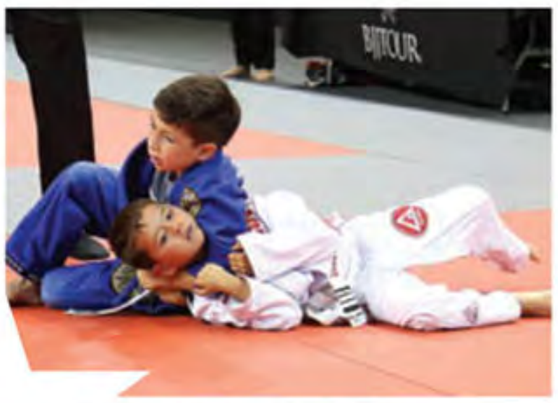
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OSS!

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WORDS: **HEATHER RAFTERY**

ROOTED IN THE TRADITIONAL JAPANESE ORIGINS OF THE MARTIAL ART, "OSS" OR "OSU" IS NOW AN INSEPARABLE PART OF THE BRAZILIAN JIU-JITSU VOCABULARY. AN ABBREVIATION OF THE JAPANESE "ONEGAI SHIMASSU," IT DOESN'T HAVE A DIRECT TRANSLATION INTO ENGLISH – IN FACT, ITS MEANING CAN CHANGE DEPENDING ON WHEN AND WHERE IT IS USED – BUT IT GENERALLY REFERS TO THE ACT OF HOPING OR ASKING FOR SOMETHING IN A WAY THAT BESTOWS HONOR OR GOODWILL.

As with any word that becomes part of a specialized lingo, Oss has taken its own set of meanings within jiu-jitsu. And just as with jiu-jitsu, you can reach different levels of proficiency with the word... what level are you?

WHITE BELT LEVEL

Your knowledge of Oss is limited to the most basic of uses.

Like "Aloha", Oss can mean both hello and goodbye; especially, when interacting with a higher belt. Like a sunburnt tourist in a hibiscus flower patterned shirt, you'll find yourself using it at every possible moment, often accompanied by a sweaty handshake and a partial and awkwardly executed bow.

BLUE BELT LEVEL

You have discovered that Oss has a wider variety of uses. Congratulations.

Aside from the standard greeting, Oss can be used to disguise the fact that you don't know your teammate's name despite having trained together for nearly a year. It conveniently replaces "Hey Buddy", "Hey Man", and "Hey... you... who I know".

Oss can also be used to initiate action such as drilling or rolling. It typically follows a slap and bump and precedes a sweaty, grunt-filled battle in which far too much strength is exerted in trying to submit your opponent.

More commonly, Oss expresses agreement or understanding. For example, your professor has just finished showing a complicated technique, he or she asks if everybody understands and a few Osses sound out. Odds are you probably don't understand, but your glorious professor doesn't need to know that.

Oss can also be used to establish solidarity with the group. Your professor has just finished a heartfelt speech about jiu-jitsu as family, as life, and the ultimate expression of the unity between the physical and the mental. You may find yourself so overwhelmed by emotion that "Oss" is all that you can utter. That's understandable.

At this point, you might have already starting naming your cat Oss, along with your dog Kimura and your pet snake Ralek.

PURPLE BELT LEVEL

You have now begun to experiment with Oss, with varying degrees of success.

You might use it as an adjective: "Man, that move you just hit... dude, that was seriously Oss-worthy." You might use it as a noun: "You seriously missed out... The Oss was strong today on the mat." You might find yourself replacing various expressions with Oss, such when you finally understand a particular move, and a "Ohhh" somehow turns into "Ohhhhssss". It might sneak into your non-jiu-jitsu life, such as thanking the grocery store clerk with an "Oss" when she gives you back your change. Maybe you even use it as an expletive, such as "Osss-You!!" Take care, this last one might cause confusion... due to the generally positive connotation of "Oss", the person you direct it at may not know whether to punch you in the face or befriend you.

In this "Oss Discovery" stage, you will receive strange looks; especially, from the higher belts. But that's okay, you'll still be a god among the white belts, and they will hang on your every Oss-ified word.

BROWN BELT LEVEL

Your use of Oss has matured, and you have reached a level where you are now fully cognizant not only of the correct time and manner in which to use it, but your delivery as well.

You might elongate the vowel, such as with "Ooooooooos" to express a far deeper solidarity with your fellow jiu-jitsu player. Here, the length of the "O" is directly proportional to the feeling of brotherhood or sisterhood you might have at the moment. Your Oss might be executed in a short and sharp manner, like a salute, declaring your understanding of the seriousness of task at hand, such as rolling with the visiting brown belt from a rival academy. You might give it a rising and falling intonation, teasing a friend about hitting on the cute new white belt.

Your Oss game is strong, my friend.

BLACK BELT LEVEL

You have attained the highest level in your understanding of Oss.

While you might utter the word always at the appropriate time and circumstance, you rarely need to. With a single look you can communicate Oss, just as clearly as if you had spoken.

Why? Because you have discovered that the existential questions that have plagued philosophers for centuries – "Who are we?" "Why are we here?" "Is there a one, true jiu-jitsu?" – can all be explained with one single word.

You have become one with the Oss. You are the Oss.

WHY PEOPLE QUIT JIU-JITSU

I Quit

WORDS: **WILL SAFFORD** | PHOTOS: **STAFF**

FOR SOME OF US, THE THOUGHT OF QUITTING JIU-ITSU DOESN'T EVEN ENTER THE REALM OF POSSIBILITY. WE'D GO INSANE WITHOUT OUR WEEKLY FIX OF HUMAN CHESS. We continually need to challenge our body and mind, test our ego, and connect with our fellow gi wearing brothers and sisters. For some, however, the gentle art is a passing phase that comes and goes like the wind. Oftentimes, events out of our control force us to put our practice on hold. Other times, interests fade, priorities take precedent, and nagging injuries sideline us for the long term. We'll explore the major reasons why some people quit and hang up their belts for the last time.

TIME

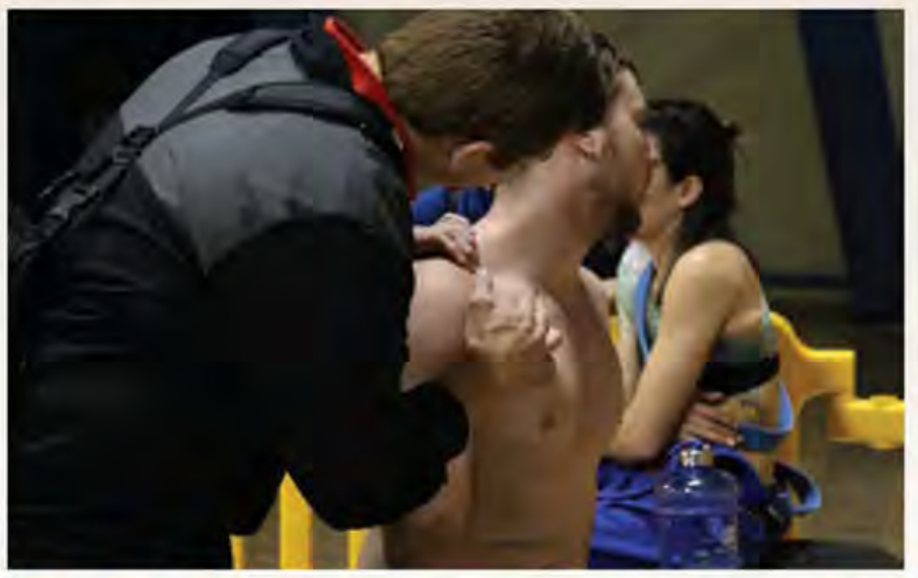
Let's face it, becoming proficient in anything takes time. The average amount of time to earn a blue belt is two years and the highly coveted black strap, ten! That's a lot of commitment and continual, dedicated practice, week after week, month after month, year after year. In a world where it feels like time is moving faster and faster, the last thing anyone wants to do is waste it.

Now, say you're a nine-to-fiver and have a normal work schedule. Your training time is usually limited to after work and maybe a weekend day. However, if you're training an average of three times per week, that doesn't leave much time for other responsibilities, hobbies, or social events. Add a family to that equation, and you have even less time to dedicate. Another way to label this source of turnover is priorities. Things that are important, or priorities, will need the most amount of time, and recreational activities like jiu-jitsu often take the back burner for many. Some just aren't willing to commit the time our martial art demands.

INJURIES

Depending on when you start jiu-jitsu will play a big factor in your ability to withstand the repetitive stress experienced from the art. Younger athletes, especially pre-teen and teenagers, can quickly recover from session to session, and will benefit from the unique flexibility, strength, and cardio demands of weekly training. Not to say all young guns are immune from career ending injuries; however, without the responsibilities of work, family, and grown up life, they can afford the time off the mats to heal up and do so much faster than their older teammates.

For those who have a few miles under their belts, chronic pain or a severe injury is enough to keep them off the mats for good. Especially during the white belt years when the body is acclimating to new movement patterns and repetitive thrashings from higher belts, it's easy to walk away from the pain. If a severe injury is had but an athlete resolves to return, the fear of reinjury or facing another is enough to warrant giving up. There's a saying in combat sports, "It's not a matter of if you'll get injured but when." For those unwilling to accept this inevitability, the academy door swings both ways.



MONEY

Typical is the case of young, determined jiu-jitsu competitors who sacrifice everything to chase the dream of becoming World Champion. A goal of this extent requires total commitment to daily training, leaving not much for else more, including a job. If sponsors are sparse and family members are unsupportive, financially at least, our young grappler's dreams are often shattered. The inability to fulfill basic human needs, like food and shelter via lack of capital, will quickly force these athletes off the mat. Often we hear stories of guys living in their cars or sleeping on the academy mats just to save their pennies for mat fees, basic living expenses, and food. Although jiu-jitsu is not as expensive as some traditional sports that require pricey equipment, it can surely add up.

Mat fees can run anywhere between $75 to $250 per month. Multiply that by 12 months, and it could cost $900 to $3,000 a year to train on a weekly basis at your local academy. Add in equipment and other fees like rash guards, gis, supplements, and tournament expenses, jiu-jitsu can become a pretty expensive endeavor. For those of us who have car, home, and/or school payments, along with living expenses, other gym duties, and social lives, costs can build up quickly. When budgets are tight and recreational activities are given the axe, jiu-jitsu is often the first one to go.

» LOSS OF MOTIVATION

The first few years of any new venture can be challenging. When you're a white belt, it may take a while to get the grasp of new techniques, to apply moves and transitions, and ultimately, to hold your own. Continually being submitted, forcing your ego aside, and staying resilient when your body, mind, and spirit want to quit is no easy task; especially, when you're paying money for it. Frustration abounds and the complex matrix that is jiu-jitsu seems like a never ending puzzle, impossible to conquer. Although many of us are hooked after the first session, some are less easily captivated, and the lack of immediate progress can cause loss of interest and motivation.

Add the amount of time it takes to receive a new belt, and you've got a recipe for turnover. Luckily there are stripes, or else the seemingly never ending transition from blue to purple would be far too long to endure. Many of us as beginners are hungry for the next belt and hastily desire for the black. If this mindset is never overcome, and the understanding that the reward is in the journey is never had, the road to black belt will be a tedious marathon, easy to abandon.

CHANGING OF GOALS

❖ Mackenzie Dern is one of those competitors who chose to stick with jiu-jitsu to reach the absolute top of her field. Now her goals have changed as she looks to take on the world of MMA.

Not everyone comes into jiu-jitsu with their sights set on a black belt. Some people just want to get a good workout without spending hours on a boring treadmill. Others desire to build confidence or learn skills to defend themselves. Some only want the basics of ground fighting to add to their martial arts arsenal. Whatever it is, people have different intentions for training, and those intentions can change over time.

Some MMA fighters have been known to earn only their blue belt in case things go to the ground in the cage. Mainly, they rely on their stand up game to earn victories, but a general understanding of jiu-jitsu is a valuable skillset to have. In cases like this, just a few years of jiu-jitsu is enough. Some people are also turned off by the sport aspect of jiu-jitsu and are content with learning basic self-defense skills. Others are either grossed out or insecure with the idea of grappling with other people in hot and sweaty conditions. Either way, the fact is people are entitled to do what they choose, and quitters just leave more space on the mats for those who are hooked on the gentle art.

If you're reading this, you're probably one of those hooked and wouldn't give up your mat time for anything. People work two jobs, have families, jobs, and commitments, but still find an hour here and there to get a few rolls in. If you've ever wondered why some people slap and bump fists, ready to roll one day, then are gone the next, now you know. Life comes at as all differently, but you should feel much more prepared for it, knowing you still train jiu-jitsu.

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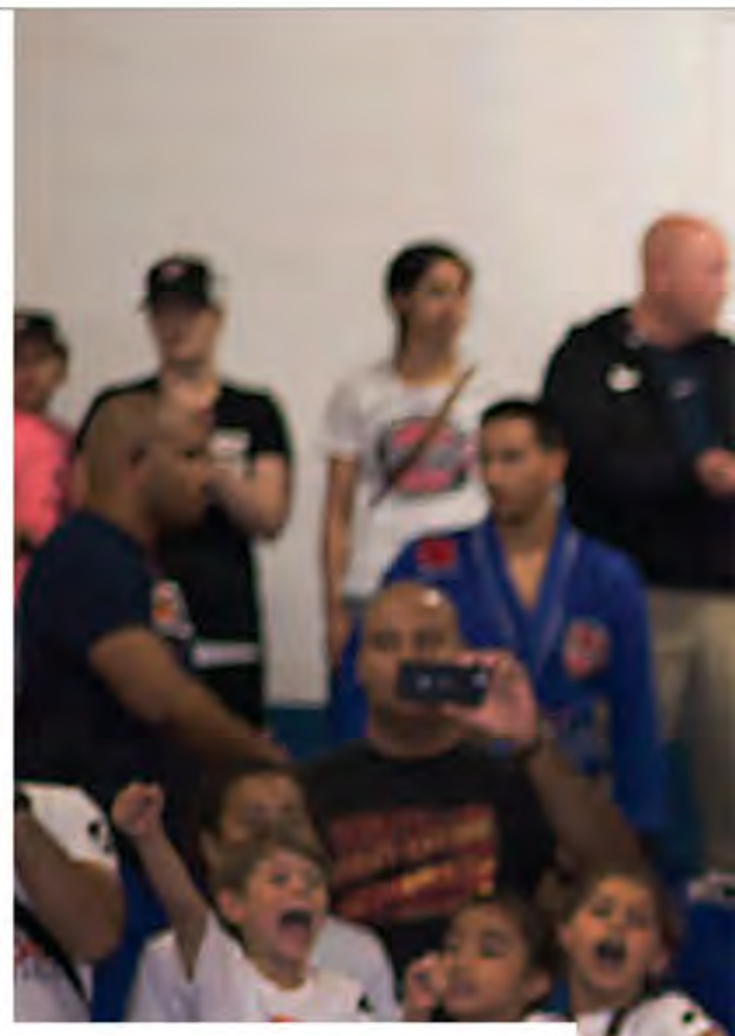
WORDS: **STAFF** | PHOTOS: **PETER MARTIN**



SUMMER IS IN FULL SWING AND IT'S TIME FOR THE BJJ TOUR TO MAKE IT'S ANNUAL STOP IN THE GREAT STATE OF CONNECTICUT. GRAPPLERS FROM AROUND THE TRI-STATE AREA MADE THE DRIVE, THE TRAIN, THE UBER, TO MAKE IT TO THE DANBURY WAR MEMORIAL IN DANBURY CONNECTICUT. The entire day was packed with action from the kids all the way to the black belt adults. When the dust settled it was Soulfighters, lead by Rafael "Formiga" Barbosa, that took first place in both the Kids and the Adults divisions. In both categories it was GF Team taking silver and Unitiy Jiu-Jitsu collecting bronze. This was the fourth of five BJJ Tour stops for 2016. The final stop takes place in Las Vegas Nevada this December 3rd. There's still a lot of the $50,000 in prize money up for grabs. Enter today.

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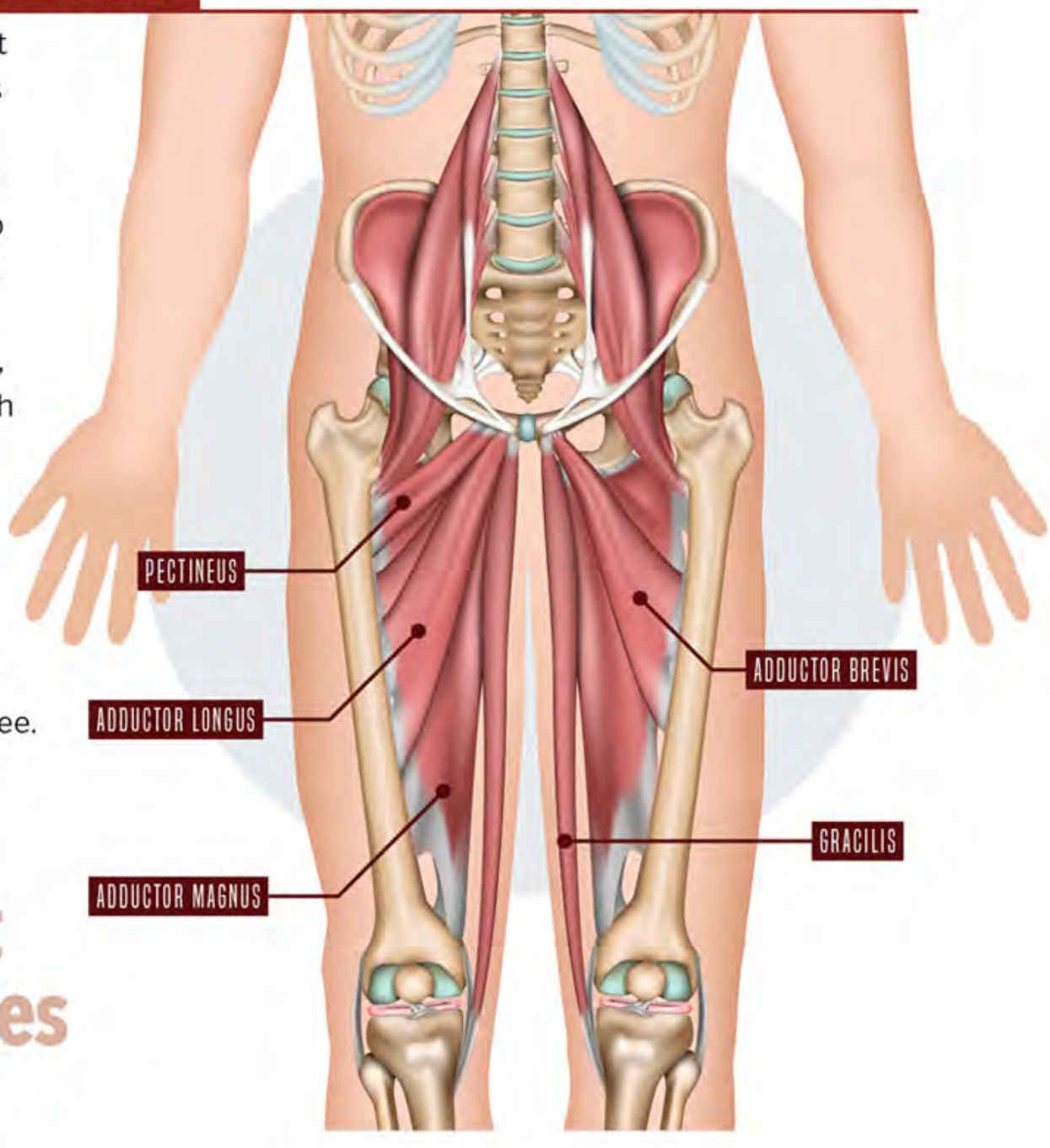
HIP PAINS & PULLED GROINS

WORDS: **DR. JOHN PARK**

A "PULLED GROIN", OR HIP ADDUCTOR STRAIN, IS ONE OF THE MOST COMMON HIP INJURIES ENCOUNTERED DURING SPORTS PARTICIPATION. WHILE USUALLY NEVER CAREER ENDING, IT CAN CERTAINLY BE A NUISANCE TO THE JIU-JITSU ATHLETE IN PARTICULAR WHERE HIP MOVEMENTS ARE CRITICAL TO ALMOST EVERY ASPECT OF THE ART. Whether it is holding an opponent in one's closed guard, securing a leg lasso, or preventing someone from passing your halfguard, your hip adductors must remain active and contract with varying degrees of force to move our body or to manipulate our opponent's movements the way we intend. In anatomical terms, hip adduction means we are bringing our thighs closer to midline. If your thighs are positioned outwards, your adductor muscles are what allow you to pull them closer to the center of the body.

THE ANATOMY

There are five muscles that make up the hip adductors which are divided into two groups - the short hip adductors and the long hip adductors. The three short adductor muscle are the pectineus, adductor brevis, and adductor longus, which originate from the pelvis and insert on the femur. The two long adductor muscles are the gracilis and adductor magnus, which originate from the pelvis and insert on the knee.



Anatomy of Hip joint with muscles identified

» WHAT DOES "PULLED" MEAN?

When a muscle is "pulled", we are essentially referring to a muscle strain. A strained muscle occurs when the muscle is stretched beyond its normal length, causing tears in the muscle fibers and associated connective tissues. With this type of trauma there is obvious pain from damage to soft tissues along with bleeding that occurs from blood vessels breaking. Muscle strains are divided into three grades. A Grade 1 strain involves mild pain without restriction of activity. Grade 2 strains are more painful causing limiting activity, and they may have associated bruising and swelling. Grade 3 strains are the most severe, with intense pain, severely limited activity and significant bruising and swelling.

The adductor longus is the most commonly injured muscle with a typical pulled groin. Sometimes, you can actually detect small defects in the adductor muscle where the tear occurs by palpating the inside of the thigh. This can feel like a small indentation or divot as you press along the length of the muscle. While this may seem alarming, there is not much that can be done since the muscle fibers cannot be individually attached. Fortunately, pulled groins rarely require surgical correction and usually heal on their own, but you may have a permanent palpable defect in the muscle where it was torn.

What else could it be?

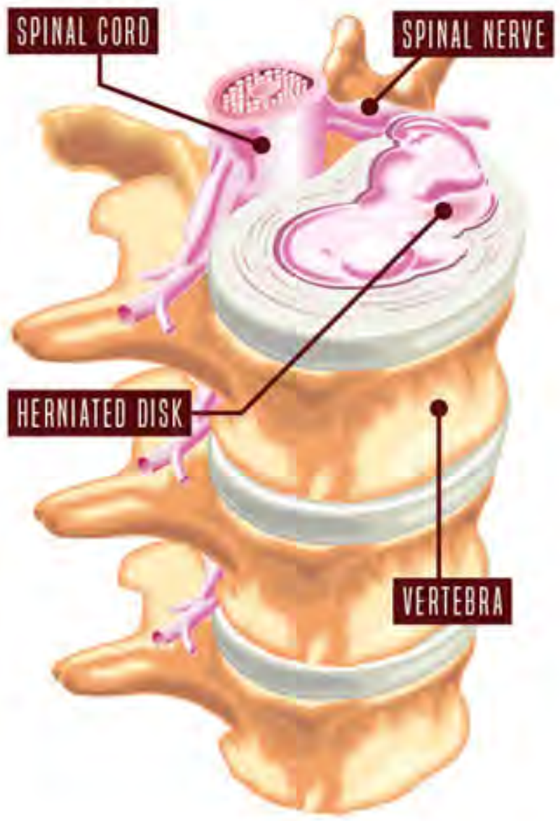
Pain on the inside of the groin and hip isn't necessarily always a pulled muscle. There are other causes of pain including an inguinal hernia, osteitis pubis, hip osteoarthritis, a sports hernia, or referred pain from a lumbar disc herniation.

INGUINAL HERNIA

An inguinal hernia occurs when part of the colon passes through a thin layer of connective tissue that separates it from the pelvic region. Although they can occur in both men and women, this is what most men identify with when they go the doctor and have their nether regions poked while coughing. If an inguinal hernia is present, the examiner can usually feel part of the colon as it descends into the region just above the testicle. Surgical repair is necessary to manage inguinal hernias.

OSTEITIS PUBIS

Osteitis pubis is the result of trauma, acute or chronic, to the area where the pubic bones meet. A direct fall on your rear end or repetitive trauma to the area can cause inflammation along with the associated pain in the groin. This condition usually resolves with rest and eliminating the activities that cause the pain.

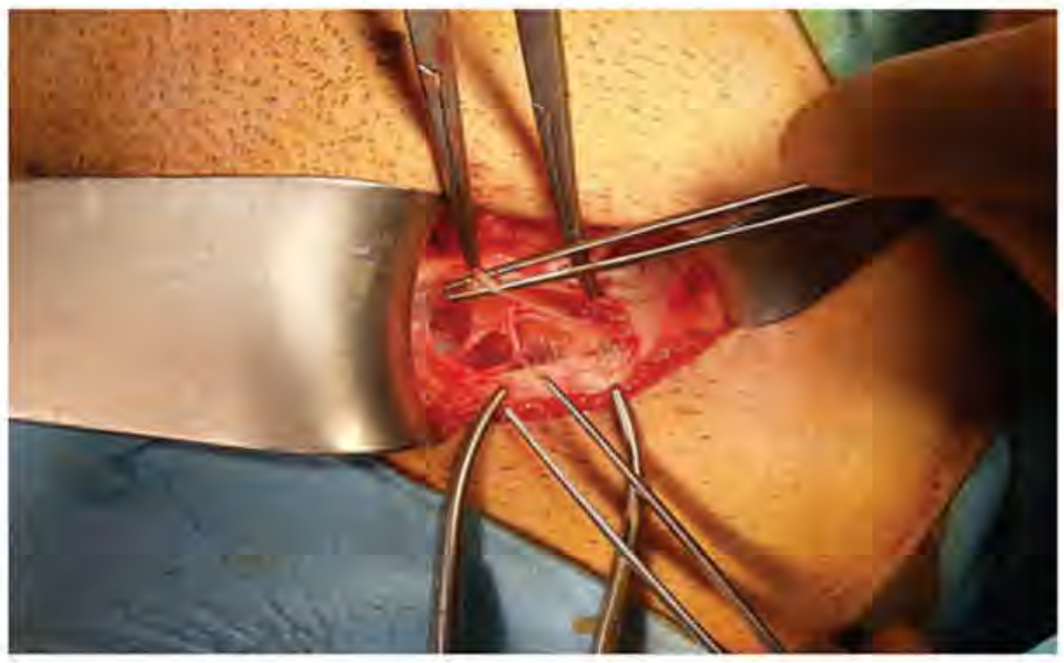


DISC HERNIATION

Disc herniations in the lower back can also cause pain to be felt in the hip and groin area. When the nerves in the lower back are compressed or irritated on one side, it is very common to feel pain on the inside of the hip and groin. This is referred to pain where the hip anatomy is normal and undamaged, but the nerves that provide sensation to that area are compromised. A physician should be able to identify and treat this accordingly with a thorough history and physical examination.

HIP OSTEOARTHRITIS

Hip joint pathology can obviously cause groin pain as well. It is common for jiu-jitsu athletes to develop arthritis in the hip joint over time through years of training. When the space decreases in the ball and socket joint of the hip, and the edges start to roughen and develop spurs, this can be painful as well as restrict normal range of motion.



SPORTS HERNIA

A sports hernia is difficul to diagnose and is often a diagnosis of exclusion – if everything else in the hip and groin appears intact and there is no source of referred pain, the condition is the result of a sports hernia. A sports hernia is a traumatic injury that results in tearing of the abdominal muscles where they attach to the pubic region. MRI studies or other advanced imaging techniques are often necessary to accurately diagnose a sports hernia.

WHEN TO SEE THE DOCTOR

Pulled groins are acute injuries – they occur quickly and the resultant pain is immediate. Without a doubt, you will know when it happens. Moderate to severe hip pain that is not the result of an acute injury from training or competition should be evaluated by a physician to rule out any of the other possible causes. Limitations with simple walking, pain that is noted at night, or pain even during rest are signs that may warrant a visit to the doctor's office.

HOW TO TREAT IT

Once an athlete pulls his/her groin, the first step is to avoid further trauma. That means stop training and rest the injured area to allow for healing to take place. Ice can be applied to the painful areas intermittently during the first 24-48 hours to reduce inflammation and help with pain. Non-steroidal anti-inflammatories [NSAIDs] like ibuprofen or naproxen can also help decrease the pain and reduce swelling. Strapping or taping the injured hip may alleviate the symptoms and allow for quicker healing as well.

As with any musculoskeletal injury, rest is important, but it is also generally recommended to initiate rehab as early as possible. For groin injuries, this means gentle range of motion exercises to improve flexibility and activate the muscles without further damaging them. For less severe injuries [Grade 1 or Grade 2 strains] gentle stretching can be done as long as it is not painful. Massage therapy can also be effective in treating minor groin pulls. It can help to relax muscles that are in spasm, increase blood flow to the injured tissues, and help prevent the formation of unwanted scar tissue. For more severe groin pulls, massage therapy should be avoided initially. With severe strains, not only will massage be painful, it can actually create more inflammation and cause more tissue damage. Physical therapy modalities like electrical stimulation, ultrasound, and cold laser can all facilitate the healing process, and a good chiropractor or physical therapist should be able to help restore hip range of motion with manual therapies.

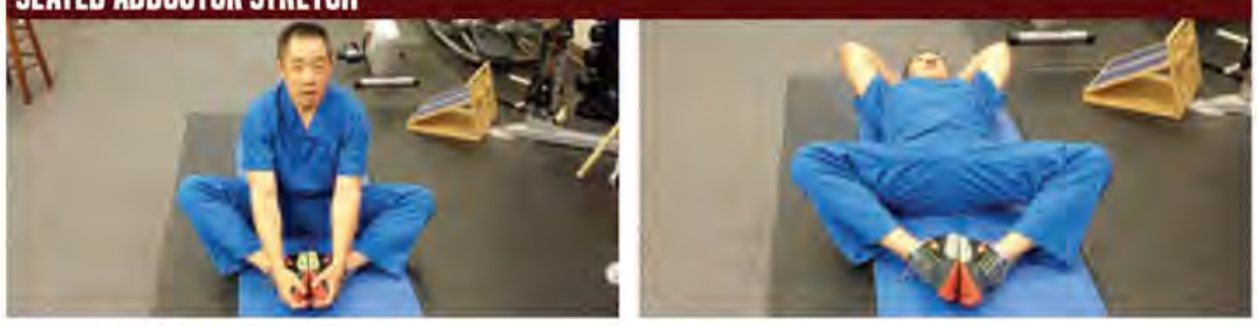
» REHAB EXERCISES FOR THE HIP «

PHASE 1: Hip Isometrics and Stretches

Stretching the hip adductors can be done in two positions – lying on your back or in the seated position with the knees flexed and feet together. Gently hold the stretch position for 15-30 seconds and repeat 3-5 times daily. Make sure not to stretch to the point of pain and do not bounce.

Isometric exercises are performed when the hip muscles are contracting without changing length. These are essentially static muscle contractions that can be done against manual resistance or using a ball. Squeeze the knees and hips together for a count of 5 to 10 seconds. Relax and repeat 10 repetitions.

SEATED ADDUCTOR STRETCH



SUPINE BALL ADDUCTION

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PHASE 2: Active Range of Motion Exercises

In this phase, we begin to contract the adductor muscles against the resistance of gravity. Laying on our sides, we can lift the affected hip and lower extremity off the floor from several positions. Three sets of 10 repetitions should be performed for each movement.

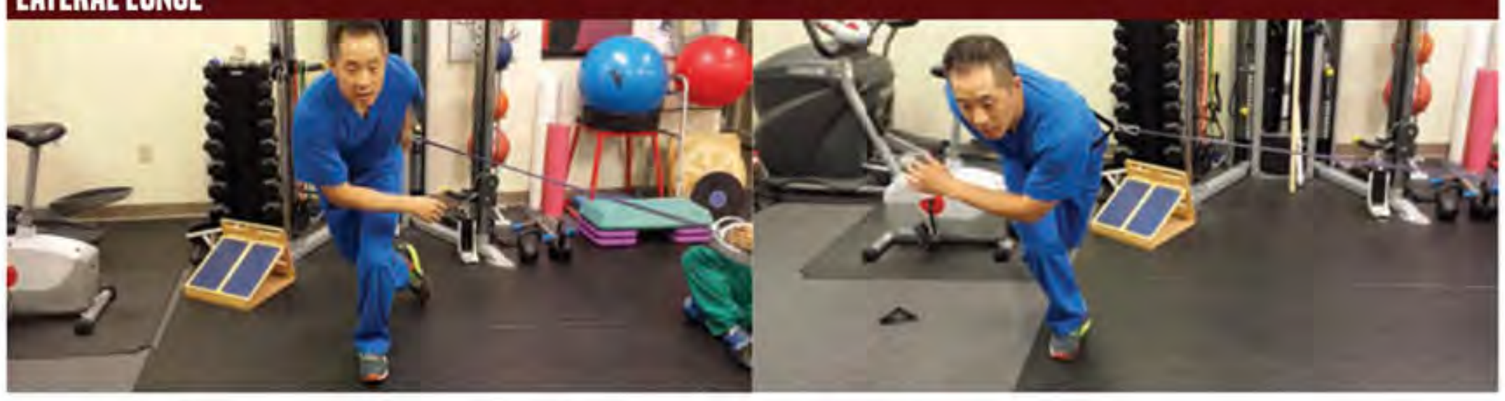
PHASE 3: Resistance Exercises

Once we are able to move the hip against the resistance of gravity without any pain, we can progress to movements against resistance. Elastic bands, cables, physioballs, and weights can be used during this phase.

- Hip abduction, adduction, and extension using bands/cables.
- Goblet squats
- Lunges (forwards and backwards)
- Lateral lunges w/resistance

Three sets of 10-15 repetitions of each exercise should be performed.

LATERAL LUNGE



GOBLET SQUAT

HIP ABDUCTION

HIP ADDUCTION

HIP EXTENSION

LUNGE

When all of these stretches and exercises can be performed without any limitations, you should be able to resume your training on the mat. It's important to remember that any previously injured area of anatomy is more susceptible to reinjury. Keeping that in mind, a good warmup that increases core body temperature and makes you break a light sweat is a good sign you are ready to engage in drilling, technique work, and light rolling. Don't let a pulled groin sideline your training; otherwise, you will be that guy in line next to the Medicare patients waiting your turn to use the hip adduction machine.

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THE PRACTICAL ART OF LIFT-JITSU

WORDS: **ARLO GAGESTEIN, CSCS, LMT** | PHOTOS: **ROB NORBUTT**

SATURDAY, APRIL 9, 2011, I WAS 15 MINUTES INTO THE INTERMEDIATE HEAVYWEIGHT FINAL OF THE CHAMPION SUBMISSION CHALLENGE IN UTAH. THE TOURNAMENT WAS SUBMISSION ONLY, AND I WAS GIVING IT EVERYTHING. I had nearly secured a triangle, and the opponent I knew only as Nicolas had stacked me and broken out. I had attacked a kimura, gotten his arm completely behind his back, and he had again somehow muscled his way out. I had been a strength and conditioning coach eight years, owned my own gym, and felt like I was significantly stronger than 90% of the people I had rolled with. Yet, somehow, this guy was throwing me around and escaping from submissions I expected to end the fight.

In training and in competition I never got tired. My conditioning was second to none...except, apparently, this guy! The match had been a fast-paced aggressive fight, but energy-wise I still felt relatively good. The trouble was my strength was fading. His quick and powerful attempts to pass my guard were met initially with aggressive defense and the threat of submissions, but it was getting harder and harder for me to match strength for strength. This was legitimately a case in which a fight between two well-matched grapplers was about to go to the stronger athlete. Five minutes later, I got caught in a straight anklelock and lost the match.

The author competing in 2011 against his nemesis Nicolas.

As a competitor, losing always immediately makes me want to work harder. Frustrated, yet inspired, I pulled up to The LAIR, a strongman style gym I owned, on the drive home and got to work with a 720 lb. tire I had just been gifted. I christened the tire "Nicolas" on the spot and decided then and there that I would never again lose a match because my strength didn't last. On Monday, when my guys showed up to train, we combined three minute rounds on the mat with tire flips and pull-ups. The Art of Lift-Jitsu was born. I refused to lose another fight because my

strength faltered. I was strong; I just wasn't able to maintain that strength throughout a 15-20 minute match. I was determined to change that.

Lift-Jitsu logic was simple. The longer we rolled, the more fatigued we got. But if we could override that, and train specifically to use near maximal strength randomly during sparring sessions, our bodies wouldn't ever be surprised when we called on them to exert sudden bursts of great strength in a match. By using big, compound, multi-joint movements, we saw the most carry-over to jiu-jitsu specific movements. Because the best way to build maximal strength is to use weight you can do fewer than five repetitions with, we kept the reps low and the weight high (we also never attempt the same big movement over and over again in a grappling match). In a nutshell, Lift-Jitsu was simply inserting heavy strength movements between rolls when most people would rest. We have been doing Lift-Jitsu one day a week now for five years, and the results have been remarkable!

THE WORKOUT

THE BASIC TEMPLATE

For Strength:

Roll 2-5 minutes
Lower Body/Full Body Movement x 5 repetitions
Upper Body Movement x 5 repetitions
Core Exercise x 10-20 repetitions
Repeat for 20+ minutes resting as necessary but only AFTER the strength movements.

For Endurance:

Roll 2-4 minutes
Full Body Movement x 1 minute
Conditioning Drill x 1 minute
Repeat for 20+ minutes resting as necessary.

LOWER BODY/FULL BODY MOVEMENTS - Tire Flips, Deadlift Variations, Squat Variations, Lunges/Split Squats, Step-Ups, Squat Jumps, Broad Jumps, Turkish Get-Ups

UPPER BODY MOVEMENTS - Pull-Ups, Rope Climbs, Bent-Over Rows, Overhead Presses, Weighted Push-Ups, Dumbbell Bench Presses, Dumbbell Floor Presses

CORE EXERCISES - Plank Variations, Pallof Presses, Dead Bugs, Russian Twists, Sledge Hammer Swings, Chops/Reverse Chops

CONDITIONING DRILLS - Rope Slams, Farmer Carries, Kettlebell Swings, Sprints, Agility Drills, Sprawls, Burpees
Depending how many people are training, Lift-Jitsu can be structured various ways. It is really up to your own creativity, but here are some ideas that have worked well for us.

TWO PEOPLE - Roll for anywhere from 3-5 minutes. Both training partners do three exercises then immediately return to the mat to roll.

THREE PEOPLE - Two partners roll for two minutes, while the third partner does the exercises. After two minutes, one of the partners on the mat rotates out to do the exercises and the person who just did the exercises comes onto the mat. After two more minutes, the last partner rotates out to do the exercises and the person who just did the exercises is back in. Each partner rolls two 2-minute rounds, then rotates out to do the exercises.

FOUR PEOPLE - Set up as if you had two people but doubled. If you have the mat space, have everyone roll at the same time and everyone lift at the same time. This way you can mix up sparring partners every time you return to the mat. If there is limited space, two people can lift while the others roll.

FIVE PEOPLE OR MORE - With five or more people, we will typically set up a circuit with additional exercise stations to rotate through. Sparring accounts for two of the stations, so each person gets to roll with both the person in front of him and behind him. An example circuit might look like this:

Rope slams x 1 minute
Tire flips x 1 minute
Roll (the person in front of you) x 1 minute
Roll (the person behind you) x 1 minute
Push-ups x 1 minute

» A FEW OF OUR FAVORITE WORKOUTS «

FOR STRENGTH

ROLL 2-5 MINUTES

Deadlift x 5

For a conventional deadlift, begin with your feet hip width apart and shins nearly touching the bar. With your hands right outside your thighs, push your hips back while keeping your chest tall to lower your hands to the bar. Your lumbar spine should remain neutral and you should feel a good stretch on your hamstrings. Grip the bar, keep your elbows straight, then put tension on the bar by squeezing your shoulder blades together and engaging your upper back muscles. From here, squeeze your glutes and drive your hips forward to stand up. Reset between every repetition to minimize technique breakdown.

** Deadlifts are one of the greatest exercises an athlete can do. That being said, if done incorrectly, they also have a great potential for injury. If you do not currently know how to perform a correct deadlift, find a qualified strength coach who can teach you before implementing them in your program. Injuries typically happen when the movement comes from lumbar spinal flexion (lower back rounds) rather than a clean hip hinge.*

Rope Climb x 1-3

Because this is our upper body movement, if possible, climb the rope using your hands only. It works best to pull simultaneously with both hands, generating upward movement before releasing the bottom hand to grab higher up on the rope. If hands only climbing is too difficult, ab high on the rope, pull your feet off the ground and hold yourself up as long as possible. To make hands-only climbing more difficult you can hold your body in an "L" position like Lucas is doing in the photo.

Sledge Hammer Swing x 10 Each Side

Grab a sledge with both hands and swing as hard as you can, with control, at a tire. Be sure to swing both right handed and left h nded. For right handed swings, your right hand is above your left, nd the hammer begins over your right shoulder. Left h nded is just the opposite. Start with your upper hand closer to the head of the hammer for more control and slide it down to your opposite hand during the swing to generate more force. Once the hammer contacts the tire, your upper hand slides up to control the rebound and prevent the hammer from ricocheting into your shins.

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FOR STRENGTH

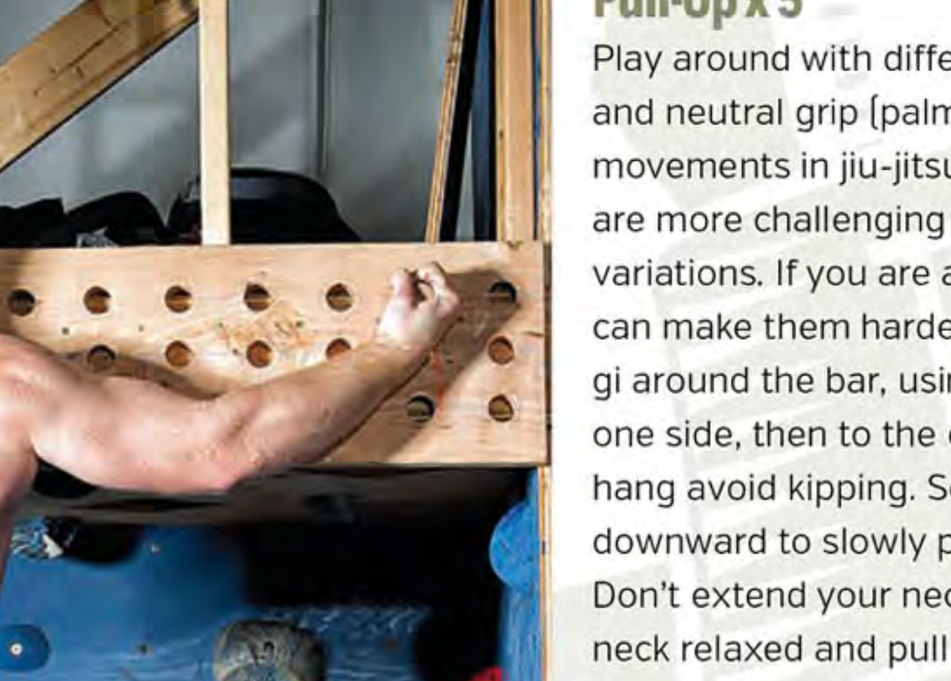
ROLL 2-5 MINUTES

Tire Flip x 1-5 (depending on tire size)

Tire flips are similar to deadlifts in that you want to lower your shoulders and hips and grasp under the tire with your fingers while keeping your arms straight and lumbar spine neutral. Drop your hips low enough that your lower back doesn't round, then while flipping, make sure your hips and shoulders come up at the same time rather than letting your hips come up before your shoulders and the tire start to raise. The larger the tire, the further back you want your feet. With really big tires, it is necessary to start with your feet quite a ways from the tire. Then, rather than trying to lift the tire, you drive your shoulders up and away at a 45-degree angle to push the tire over its pivot point on the ground.

Pull-Up x 5

Play around with different grips. Chin-ups (palms facing you) and neutral grip (palms facing each other) are most similar to movements in jiu-jitsu. Pull-ups (palms facing away from you) are more challenging however, so we mix it up doing different variations. If you are able to do more than five pull-ups, you can make them harder by adding weight, gripping a towel or gi around the bar, using a pegboard, or pulling your body to one side, then to the other like Jeff is in this photo. From a dead hang avoid kipping. Squeeze your shoulder blades together and downward to slowly pull your body up and chin over the bar. Don't extend your neck to reach with your chin, rather, keep your neck relaxed and pull your body up to the bar.



Superband Plank Pull x 5-10 Each Side

Anchor a superband (or another resistance band) to a squat rack or another immoveable object (a training partner can also hold it). Begin facing the band in a plank position at a distance with your arm outstretched- there is slight resistance on the band. With feet wide, grip the band and slowly pull your elbow toward your side without allowing your lower back to sag or hips to rotate. Fighting any hip rotation as though your life depends on it makes all the difference on this exercise!

FOR ENDURANCE

ROLL TWO MINUTES

Heavy Bag Turkish Get-Up x 1 minute

Begin lying on your back with a heavy bag lying across your chest and right shoulder. Hip out to the right and use your left rm to help push your torso upright. Post up on your left h nd while bringing your left leg bac into a half kneeling position. With the heavy bag balanced across your right shoulder, stand up. Reverse the motion until you are back at the starting position. You can switch shoulders after 30 seconds or every set.

Rope Slam x 1 Minute

There are dozens of great ways to use battle ropes. Any of them are fine. Just grab the ropes and start slamming. A basic version is to begin with feet hip width apart and ropes in hands on the outsides of the thighs. Do a quick half squat then explode up while bringing the ropes over your head. Slam them back into the ground as you drop back into a half squat. Repeat.

THE WORKOUT

ABOUT

ARLO GAGESTEIN

Arlo Gagestein is a Drysdale Jiu-Jitsu purple belt under Eduardo Mori in Ogden, UT. He has a bachelor's degree in Human Performance and is a NSCA Certified Strength and Conditioning Specialist, a Certified MMA Conditioning Coach, and a Sports Massage Therapist. Arlo owns Competitive Edge Fitness in Ogden where he trains Jiu-Jitsu competitors, MMA fighters, soldiers, and athletes from many other sports. Arlo is the author of **Warrior Core: Core Training Secrets for the Modern Combat Athlete (warriorcorebook.com)** and Battle Tested: How to Train Like Your Life Depends on It **(battletestedbook.com)**. You can follow Arlo's blog at **jiujitsuadvantage.ninja.**

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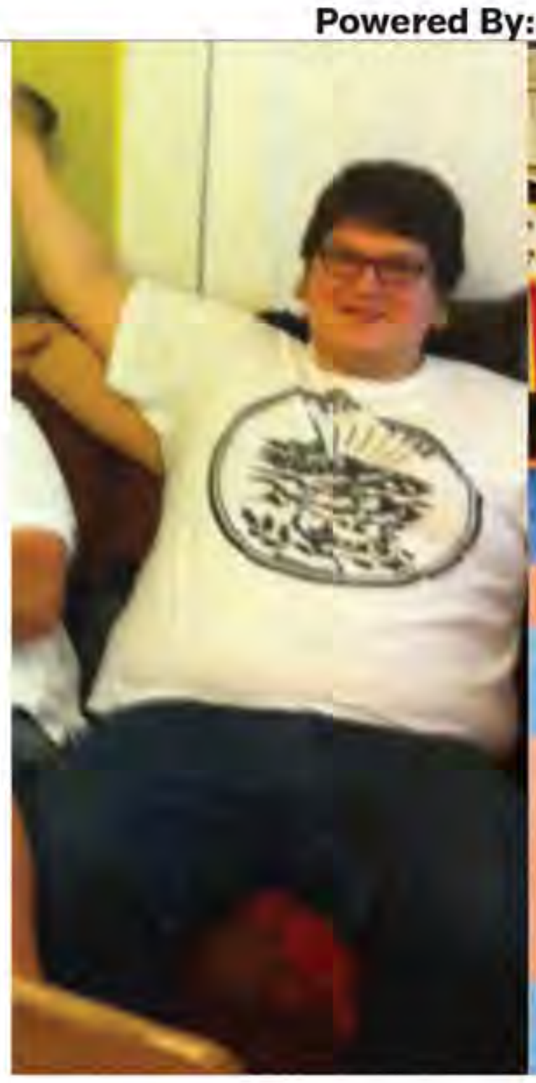
KYLE FOWLER



KYLE FOWLER HAS LOST A TOTAL 160LBS THROUGH DIET, EXERCISE, AND JIU-JITSU. WHEN HE REACHED 360 POUNDS, HE KNEW IT WAS TIME TO WORK HARD AND GET HEALTHY. He always had a love for jiu-jitsu from watching MMA but was too intimidated to start because of his weight. His older brother had trained off and on and finally dragged Kyle down to the gym when he was visiting, and he has been hooked ever since. At the point when he started training jiu-jitsu he was around 275lbs and at a plateau with his weight loss. "After my first holiday open mat where I got my ass kicked by everyone there, I signed up for classes and barely missed a chance to train," says Kyle. Through eating right and adding jiu-jitsu to his schedule by training at least two to four times a week, his weight loss overcame its plateau. No other form of exercise could keep his attention, but jiu-jitsu was different. In eight months, he earned his blue belt and was walking around at 225lbs. He continued to train and watch what he ate, and today he's down to 205lbs, making his total weight loss 160 pounds. His current goal weight is 180lbs- that means that when he reaches that goal he will have cut his original weight in half. Kyle says that without the influence of his professor and training partners, he doesn't think he could be at the weight he is now. And without the knowledge he's gained through training jiu-jitsu, he would not be as healthy as he is.

AGE: 27 | **HEIGHT:** 6'0 | **STARTING WEIGHT:** 360 | **CURRENT WEIGHT:** 205
HOMETOWN: Bradenton, Fl | **HOME SCHOOL:** Compass Jiu-Jitsu
INSTRUCTOR: David Gatke | **BELT RANK:** Purple

HOW DID YOU DISCOVER JIU-JITSU? I was introduced to jiu-jitsu through my brother by watching the first UFC events when I was in high school. My brother also started training before me and showed me the way and brought me to a local gym to start training on my own.

WHAT MOTIVATES YOU TO TRAIN? The drive to gain knowledge and grow as a person.

WHAT ELSE DO YOU DO FOR PHYSICAL FITNESS? I have a road bike I ride a few times a week on off days from the gym. I also do warm-ups I remember and different solo movements and drills we were taught in class like rolling squats, shrimps, upas, all that good stuff.

HOW HAVE YOU CHANGED YOUR DIET? I have drastically changed my diet from the days when I was 360 pounds. Through my whole journey of weight gain and loss I have been a vegetarian, but with time, I learned how to properly balance my diet. I try to avoid fast food and processed food. Portion size and eating on a schedule are also important rules to follow- all the basic stuff you hear all the time. It works if you work it.

WHAT'S BEEN THE BIGGEST CHALLENGE SO FAR? The biggest challenge so far for me has been to stay focused and to not get complacent with minor goals but to keep a focus on being healthy and making a change in my eating habits and to exercising regularly.

WHAT'S BEEN THE BEST BENEFIT FROM THE CHANGES YOU'VE MADE?
The best benefit I have felt from this change is that I am happy now. I'm comfortable being myself and I feel like jiu-jitsu has helped me with this as much as the weight loss. Gaining confidence in myself and seeing the progress in the gym from working hard, paying attention, and being helpful to others has helped improve my mood and the weight loss is just icing on the cake.

WHAT ADVICE WOULD YOU GIVE TO SOMEONE ELSE LOOKING TO MAKE THE SAME SORT OF CHANGE?
My advice to someone looking to make a change with their health would be to start slow and remember it will not happen overnight. It took me three and a half year with plenty of plateaus and even some weight gain. It's not a race; it's about improving and every little bit adds up to getting you in better shape. For anyone looking to start jiu-jitsu that is worried about not being in shape, my advice is to just start training. Get in the gym and do your best and if you really try you will improve, and as you improve you will get in better shape. No one will be at the gym making fun of you. They will all want to help you improve and get healthy.

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